

A
Theological Theory
OF A
Plurality of WORLDS.

Being a *Critical, Philosophical, and*
Practical Discourse,
CONCERNING
Visible or Material WORLDS.

By D. STURMY, M. A. Rector of *East-*
Hatley, in the County of *Cambridge*, and
Chaplain to the Right Honourable the
Earl of *Litchfield*.

Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God, Heb. xi.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE
Right Reverend Father in GOD,
WILLIAM,
Lord Bishop of *Lincoln.*

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordship may be very
much surpriz'd to see your Ill-
lustrious Name prefix'd before so mean
a Composition; but, My Lord, I do
assure your Lordship, The Liberty I
usurp in this abrupt approach, is not
owing to any want of Esteem for your
Lordship, or to an extravagant Opi-
nion of my own Performances; no one
can have a profounder Veneration for
Your Lordship, than my self, or for
the Episcopal Character; tho' not al-
A 2 *ways*

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ways supported with so bright a Lustre, as in Your Lordship's Example. I know my distance from Your Lordship plac'd in so high a Sphere, and without it too; I know my own Obscurity, and my Writings unworthiness of so Ornamental an Inscription; yet, I Hope, I may know all this, and my Obligations to Your Lordship, at the same time. Being indebted for Favours of a long standing, I cou'd not but lay hold of this Opportunity of making the most publick Acknowledgment I am able, to my first living Benefactor.

Since therefore I am acknowledging, not seeking a Patron; I hope Your Lordship will forgive my making this Address without your leave. I never was of an asking Temper, and therefore wou'd not ask, what I was morally sure wou'd be deny'd. There is a sort of vanity, I confess, in acknowledging Favours from great Men

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Men; but I cannot be justly suspected in this case, because I received them from Your Lordship in that part of my Life, when nothing but my want of them cou'd recommend me; and, such was your Generosity, That alone was sufficient: The same Goodness which dispos'd you to regard me then, will, I trust, incline Your Lordship not to despise this poor Oblation of Gratitude.

As for the Tract it self, it presumes not to seek Your Lordship's Patronage. If it contains Truth, and may do some Good, which might not have been done, in case it had never been written, it needs not the Patronage of great Men; and I shall not be so unreasonable as to request of Your Lordship, to skreen it from the Censures it must deserve, if the Contents of it shou'd appear to be Chimerical or Pernicious: upon this Supposition Your Lordship wou'd be

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the last Person from whom I must look for shelter.

Indeed, several Blemishes in the Composition, which are inseparable from Writers of an inferiour Class, may stand in need of Your Lordship's Wing to cover them. The Well-descended and finish'd Gentleman, The polite and courteous Traveller, the Universal Scholar, the Thorough-studied Divine, the Person of a Prudence and Experience consummated by a great variety of reputable and well-fill'd Stations, the exemplary Christian, the Vigilant and Magnanimous Prelate, are all of them Characters, which, when found alone, promise a great deal of Generous Conivance; where-ever therefore they are concenter'd, they must flow with the most liberal Streams of Candour and must render the Protection they please to afford, too graceful to have the Justice or Power of it call'd in question.

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Distinguish'd Genius's, who soonest
see Failings, and correct them with
a Look, make the most favourable al-
lowances for them, provided they are
Mistakes of an Harmless Nature;
upon this Consideration, had I sought
out a Patron for my Labours, Your
Lordship must naturally have been
first in my Thoughts: But I cannot
have the Front or Heart to ask Your
Lordship's Umbrage, for what has
not been supravised by Your Lord-
ship.

Had I not been sensible with what
a vast weight and stress the largest
Diocess in the Kingdom rests upon
Your Lordship's Thoughts, I might
have requested Your Lordship's Pe-
rusal of these Papers, before they
were committed to the Press, and
then they wou'd have been refin'd by
a Correction; which wou'd have most
effectually defended them from the

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File of the severest Critick: But the publick Welfare was too much interested in Your Lordship's Time and thinking, to allow a Request of this Nature decent; and therefore, for want of such an Assistance, the Stile and Structure of this Essay labours under several Disadvantages: But I cou'd not be disheartned by this Circumstance, since a Man may do good without the fame of a celebrated Author.

All Persons cannot, few indeed can, write on any Subject with such Perfection or Success, as Stillingfleet the Venerable, and another Prelate not to be named whilst alive, have done long since, in the defence of the Establish'd Church. Nevertheless, they may have an Ambition to propagate Truth, and serve the interest of Religion, in proportion to their Sphere and Capacity; Being well assur'd that 'tis an Honour and Happiness

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*pires to be a Hewer of Wood, and
Digger of Water in such a Service:
This is what I aspire to, and in the
Attempt I dare depend upon being
countenanc'd by Your Lordship.*

*So begging Your Lordship's Bless-
ing for Myself and my Endeavours,
I remain,*

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Dutiful,

And Obedient Servant,

DANIEL STURMY.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

NEXT to God, I am the best Judge of my *Intention* in publishing these imperfect Papers; to him only I am accountable for *that*, who only can see it. A *Clergyman's* Designs should of course be presumed by *Men* not to be *base* or *trifling*, since they ought to be the most *solid* and *honourable*; Nevertheless, some account shall be given of the *Papers* themselves; this may very fairly be expected.

They are written, I confess, with great Disadvantages; most Persons read a Book of this kind with such inextricable Prejudices, for want of turning their Thoughts this way, that 'tis next to Impossible to root them out, with the strongest force of Arguments. Some are possess'd with an inordinate Esteem of *Modern* Authors, and an *unaccountable* Contempt of the *Ancients*: Others have an inordinate Esteem for the *Ancients*, and
shew

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shew an unjust Contempt of the *Moderns*. They will not with the *Writer* (tho' he writes with the most Religious and Modest Caution, and entreats them with the lowest Submission to do it) carefully distinguish between what he offers for *certain*, and what only as *probable*, and what only as *possible*. Whatever has but the Air of *Novelty* in *Theological* Tracts, displeases them. In their Conceptions, it implies a Design against the Purity of the Faith of the *Reader*, and unpardonable Arrogance in the *Writer*. A Scornful and Bigotted Temper will condemn by the Lump some Books and Notions without Mercy, and without weighing what is alledg'd in their Defence. With them, right or wrong, they must be *Whimsical*, *Monkish*, and *Heretical*, before they have been so much as carelessly run over. Hence it is that the most generous Undertakings of the Press, labour under the greatest discouragements. For it is very grating to Minds, even of the most *Philosophical* and *Christian* Temper, to be wrongfully Stigmatized for *vain Visionaries*, with the most Barbarous and *Arbitrary* disdain. These Gentlemen wou'd not be such preposterous Enemies to their own improvement in *Christian Knowledge* and *Charity*, if they wou'd but be at the trouble

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trouble of minding the Difference between those *New Positions* and *Elucubrations* of Divine Writ, which overthrow the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, and others which *corroborate* them, and set them in a clearer Light.

A little candour and thinking will convince 'em, that St. Paul's condemning the vain Philosophy of *Gnosticks* and *Pagans*, and *Rabbins* undeservedly so stil'd, does not condemn that Philosophy which exhibits the Glory of God's Creation to us, and teaches us to admire the wonderful *Drama's* of Divine Providence, and excites in us a due Veneration for his Wisdom and Goodness display'd in innumerable noble Structures, and the diversify'd states of Angels and Men; for ought we know, the most Capacious among finite Minds, may find an unexhaustible Fund of Thought, and new Discoveries throughout all Eternity, in so diffusive a Scene as all the Creations of God must be. How much more then must the Contemplation of lower Minds upon them, entertain them during the short Continuance of this little Life, with some new Remarks which they had not made before? It must be confess'd, that such Magnificent and remote Scenes cannot be very closely, and perfectly *Theoriz'd* by us: but tho'

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tho' our Contemplation cannot now comprehend or exhaust all the Particulars about them, that may be known by *other* Minds in their *present* State, or by our *own* Minds in some *future* World; yet we ought to endeavour by Prayer and Meditation to know as much of this Divine Subject in our present State as we can. The Word of God gives us unspeakable Advantages in this particular; And provided we go no deeper than *it* directs and supports us, we need not lose our selves in this profound Abyss of Thought: no doubt it will carry us safe a great way and enrich our *Searching* Souls with plentiful encrease of Discoveries; for not only the *Works*, but the *Word* of God is a great Deep; and as the *Heavens* (tho' they lie open to every Mans view in every Age of Mankind; and many benignant Influences of them upon our Orb, are necessarily discern'd and enjoy'd by the *laziest* Inhabitants of the Earth) do more than afford matter of more entertaining Speculations to the *curious* and *inquisitive* and *Astronomers* find out Stars which others never see; and the *Astronomers* of every Age make new Calculations which were not made by their ingenious Predecessors of former Ages in Mathematical Studies so the *Scripture* is too liberal a Foundation

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of Knowledge, and Divine Revelations to be drunk dry by the Thirst, and supply'd Necessities of particular Men, or Ages of Men. All Persons of devout and ingenious Dispositions observe the Truths necessary for Salvation, but diligent Readers find out more than those; moreover, Men learned as well as diligent and devout, find out more than the merely diligent, and the learned of latter Ages enjoying the benefit of the Labours of the learned in foregoing Ages, do still succeed better in their Researches, and draw out richer Treasures of Divine Knowledge from this Magnificent Storehouse; and *Divinity* being so vast a Science (for indeed every Thing may be considered in a *Theological* Way and Respect) any particular Person of a liberal Education, who pitches upon some special Branch of it, and bestows a very intent application of Mind upon it, whilst others of *Superiour* Learning and Abilities take but a *Cursor*y View thereof, may pretend to bring forth a *new Production*, without an inordinate Opinion of his own *Sufficiency*, or a want of Deference to their brighter Talents. The *Sparta* which I profess to cultivate, is not so contemptible a Spot of Ground, that I need be ashamed to own my self, to have dedicated the main of the *Clerical* part of my Life to the *Improvement* and *Decoration* of it. We

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We have no just Discourse upon this Subject. Cou'd some great Originals have been met with in the Works of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, or St. Cyprian, a Translation of them wou'd have been more acceptable to Others, and a pleasanter Task than the present to my self: But by what we know of their Works that are *extant*, this is an Happiness only to be wish'd for. The last Age groan'd under the same Infelicity with all the foregoing Centuries of the Church in this particular; for in our own Times and Language, no Tillotson or Stillingfleet have beat the Way before us. Since therefore I am under the poor Silkworms Misfortune, the Reader must be content with the little Stock I can work out of my own thinking: These raw and undigested Threads may be of some Service in the Hands of *Artists* hereafter.

• A *Plurality of Worlds* is a favourite Subject with many *Devout* and *Philosophical* People; and I hope it is a pardonable Sally of Vanity, to believe that the Publication of this Essay will be prefer'd by *them* at least, (notwithstanding the meanness of it) to their having none at all, upon so *uncultivated* a piece of Divinity; the very Study and Pains it has cost me both to conceive and deliver it, bespeaks

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speaks a favourable Reception for it.

'Tis true, we have found a Plurality of several Kinds of Worlds in the Scriptures; but they did not lie upon the *Surface* of Divine Writ, or strike our less heedful Notice there, as *Faith* and *Repentance*, and other *Fundamental* Articles of Religion do: Some Truths (whereof this is one) grow like *Mines* in the Writings of the *Gospel* it self; they branch themselves forth into *vast Diffusions*; but they are all *under-ground*; there is no coming at them, unless we will be at the Pains of digging deep in the *Bowels of Revelation* for them. Accordingly, *our Blessed Lord* advised the *Jews*, *John v. 39.* to *search the Scriptures*, as *Miners* do the *Earth* for rich *Ore*, for the *Greek word* *ἔγρυπτο*, imports such a Search; 'tis for want of such Searching, that the *Carnal Jew* does not find such a *Messiah* in the Writings of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, as the *Patriarchs* did of old, and as *Christians* now discern to be describ'd in them. These, but especially the *Clergy*, amongst them, shou'd spare no labour to find out the remotest Contents of that Divine Book. Accordingly, in every Age some new Discoveries have been made, in proportion to the Labours of Contemplative *Priests* and *Lay-men*, who have been still more illustrating time after time the *Prophetical*

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phetical, and other *difficult* Parts of Divine Writings.

But it has been the Fate of *this* Noble Subject, to be in a manner wholly neglected, whilst most other *Topicks* have been worn Thread-bare, and handled all manner of Ways; Nevertheless, *It* has not been quite over-look'd. We find some mention of it in the Writers of the first six Centuries, in some *interspers'd* Passages and *Fragments* of their Writings.

And, as among the Moderns, *Galileo*, *Gassendus*, *Huygens*, *Newton*, *Fontanelle*, *Cheyne*, and others, have done Justice to the *Astronomical* part of the Subject: so no less a Person than the Illustrious Bishop *Wilkins* hath condescended to treat of the Habitableness of some of the *Planetary* Orbs in the Way of a *Problem*; nevertheless, very little has been said upon the *Theological* part of this Subject of *Visible* and *Material* Worlds. The learned Dr. *Bentley* has something about it in his *Boyles* Lectures, and the incomparable Dr. *Jenkins* a great deal more in his excellent *Vindication of the Christian Religion*; but he has not so far oblig'd the World, as to establish this Assertion upon a sure Foundation.

The Industrious Mr. *Whiston* has advanced something about a *Plurality of Creations*; but 'tis circumscrib'd within the Limits

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mits of such an *intricate Hypothesis*, that I know no Writer, except the Ingenious Mr. *Ralphson* in his tract *De Universo*, that seems to favour it; however his Narrow Notion of Christs Ascent into Heaven is not more odd, than 'tis unaccountable to conceive, how that deluded Gentleman should be so flagrant an *Arrian*, whilst he professes to hold a *Plurality of Creations*.

As the *Schoolmen* have over-shot themselves in their Writings upon the Worlds of *Angels* and *Devils*, upon the Worlds of *Separate Souls*, and upon the *Resurrection-World* of Men: so 'tis certain that *Protestants* of all Denominations, have wrote too little upon them. Undoubtedly the Scriptures are far more *Copious* and *Particular* upon these Subjects, than they are commonly conceived among us to be; and thro' this defect, *Socinianism* has gain'd too much Ground in the *last Century*.

The Worlds which, for a certain Reason given in a proper place, are termed *Dispensative* or *Religionary* Worlds, have not been duly represented by any Writer; Tho' the Judicious Dr. *Bradford*, in his admirable Sermon upon *The imperfect Promulgation of the Gospel*, has given noble Hints upon that Subject.

The *Terrestrial* and *Political* Worlds have not been distinctly considered by any

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Orthodox Author at all, and yet the true meaning of the Book of *Genesis*, of several Chapters in the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, and *St. Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans*, can't be thoroughly comprehended without a competent Knowledge of these Worlds.

The *Ideal* World has far'd better than any of the rest ; a bright *Star* of the *Church*, that shines throughout the whole Kingdom, from one of the darkest Corners of the Land, has publish'd two elegant *Volumes* upon it. But *That* is but one of the great many *Worlds* which constitute the Theme of my Design, and provided I shou'd live to publish the whole Draught, whereof this little *Manuel* is a *Specimen*, I shall say very little about it.

Upon the foregoing Considerations, I have been determin'd and encouraged to turn my Thoughts with a particular intentness this way, for some Years past, and to begin the Publication of my whole Scheme now. The Penetration of Criticks will spy some Mistakes, and more Defects ; but I dare be confident, it shall find no *Herefy* here. Nothing contrary to the *Articles*, *Canons*, and *Homilies* of the Church, ventures to appear in this Book ; and by a Perusal of the whole, I hope the Candid Reader will easily observe the Spirit of *Practical Piety*, and Zeal for our Holy Church,

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Church, breathing throughout the entire Contexture of it.

If this *Theory* may help to check the insolent Triumphs of *Sceptical*, and other sorts of Modern *Libertines*, who have overlook'd a *Plurality of Worlds* in the *Scripture*, and given a wrong Turn to this Truth, with a Design of Disservice to the Writings of *Moses*, and the *Christian Religion*. If this with the remaining Parts may serve for a *Commentary* upon most of the difficultest Texts in those Writings, and may render the Doctrines of *Predestination*; of *Original Sin*, of the fall of *Angels*, of the fall of our *Protoplasts*, of *Christ's Redemption*, of the *Ministry of Good Angels to Good Men*, of our being tempted by evil *Angels*, and several other Doctrines of our Church, more intelligible to common Capacities, than they have hitherto been represented; If it may afford to devout and heavenly-minded Christians, a clearer and more entertaining *View* of their *Immortality* both before, and after the general Resurrection: if, I say, these my Labours by God's Blessing, may answer this desirable Prospect, tho' but in a low Degree, I shall in no wise repent of my Undertaking; or be discouraged from the Prosecution of it, by the rash Censures of over-nice and supercilious Judges.

• This first part of my Theory which is
now

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now in thy Hand, treats purely of *Visible and Material Worlds*: They being but *Structures*, are the most *barren Subjects* of all sorts of Worlds under the Management of a *Divine*: *Astronomers* have as great an Advantage of us here, as we shall have of them in the *other Parts* of this Work; our Knowledge of them is very imperfect; we see but their *Out-side*; however they are the *Architecture* of God; and if a *Polite well-bred Stranger* will not only gaze at a fine well-built *Temple* or *Palace* within his view, in the midst of his Travels; but will withal, as far as may be, observe the beautiful Symmetry of its several Parts, and the wise contrivance of the Architect in the Models and Plans of his designing; surely the devout and contemplative Christian can't be contented with a general view of the *Fabricks* created by *Omnipotence*, but will be further pleased in tracing, with the greatest Accuracy he can, the exacter and more regular Proportions of those splendid Structures, which God (who was a World to himself, before any one of them was created) hath made, according to Ideas of the most masterly Design, without the Fatigue of anxious Study and Deliberation.

What transporting Ideas do we conceive, when we read in the *Apocalypse*, of
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The Foundations of the Walls of a City, that were garnish'd with all manner of precious Stones; and of its twelve Gates, that were twelve Pearls, every several Gate being of one Pearl; and of its street that was pure Gold, and as it were transparent Glass? and yet most of those visible Orbs that we treat of here, are already to larger Minds than ours, and will be hereafter to our own, the occasional Causes of more delightful and dazzling Ideas, than Foundations of Jaspir, than Pavements of Sapphires, than Ways of Chrysoprasus, or Roofs of Chrysolithes and Emeralds can be; The Remembrance of this single Truth, will make even this part of our Subject more entertaining to a Christian, than it can be to a meer Astronomer. Anaxagoras thought himself made to behold and contemplate the Heavens; but the Christian knows himself made to possess them.

Perhaps some *Notions*, and the *Arguments* brought to uphold them, may seem at first blush not so well grounded as they are, to the best disposed Readers; in that Case, I must beg the favour of them to suspend their Judgment, till they have given the whole a perusal, and have afterwards thought fit to review them again; and I think any Treatise that will not bear a *second* reading, deserves none at all.

A Table

A TABLE of Scriptures ex- plain'd and illustrated in this PART.

<i>Gen.</i> i. 16.	<i>Rom.</i> i. 20.
26.	viii. 21, 39.
ii. 1, 2, 3.	xii. 2.
iii. 1.	xvi. 25.
<i>Job</i> xxxviii. 4, 5, 6, 7.	<i>1 Cor.</i> ii. 7.
<i>Isaiah</i> xl. 22.	iii. 22.
<i>Dan.</i> x.	viii. 5.
<i>Psal.</i> cxlviii. 4.	<i>2 Cor.</i> v. 1, 8.
civ. 4.	<i>Eph.</i> i. 3, 20.
<i>Mat.</i> xii. 31.	ii. 4.
xiii. 38, 39.	iii. 9, 10, 11.
<i>Luke</i> xix. 17, 19.	<i>Col.</i> i. 15, 16, 26.
xx. 34, 35, 36.	<i>1 Tim.</i> i. 17.
xxii. 30.	<i>2 Tim.</i> i. 9.
<i>John</i> i. 9, 10.	<i>Tit.</i> i. 2.
iii. 12, 17.	<i>Heb.</i> i. 1. 2.
v. 17.	ii. 2, 5.
viii. 44.	iv. 13.
xiii. 21.	vi. 45.
xiv. 2.	ix. 24, 25, 26.
xv. 18.	xi. 3.
xvii. 5.	<i>1 John</i> ii. 15.
xxi. 25.	iv. 5.

A The-

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Theological Theory
OF A
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C H A P. I. S E C T. I.

The Introduction explaining the Design of the whole Work.

A Stronomy by its Discoveries has encouraged the most celebrated Masters of that Science to conclude it highly probable that there is a Plurality of Worlds: but it is Divinity only that makes us certain of this Truth. *W O R L D S* is an expression which occurs so often in the Writings of the *Inspir'd*, that we may lay it down for an indubitable Maxim, there must be more than One; and indeed from a due perusal of the Scriptures it is very evident, that tho' the Greek Words *Αἶθρ*, and *κόσμος*, have several Senses in the Bible, there are innumerable Worlds in *one* Sense of these Words, and more than one in *every* Sense of them.

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A Plurality of Worlds in all Senses, is a more entertaining and useful Subject when consider'd *Theologically*, than it can possibly be, whilst confin'd to the Conjectures of Philosophy; which has Treated of it only in One, and that a most precarious Sense of the Term *World*. Philosophers in their Tracts upon it, shew too great a Fondness for our Earth: All Worlds with them must be *Planetary*, and Furnish'd with Seas and Forests, and Mountains, and other Resemblances of our own: but *Divine* and *Inspir'd* Senses of the Word in Scripture, open nobler Champain-Views to our Thoughts; it neither allows all Worlds to be so narrow or imperfect as this, nor all Creatures to have the same way of Subsistence, or the same Set of Necessities as Men have. The whole of God's Works is not measur'd by any *particular* Production of his Wisdom and Power. Had God indeed made none but the *System* we belong to, had he made no Creature above the Dignity of Man; we shou'd have Matter enough to Extol and Admire him, and stood accountable to him for great Obligations: but since the Case is otherwise, let not the Pleasure of our Being defraud others of theirs, nor our Eye be Evil because God is Good to other Orbs and Animals besides our selves. Since there are more Worlds than ours, and God has been pleas'd to make this Truth known to us, let them have some Share of our thinking; let us take the widest Tour we can in the immense Spaces of his Creation, that our admiration of God may be rais'd to the highest stretch of our Faculties: for alas! at the Highest it will fall infinitely
short

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short of the Perfections they adore, and that awful Reverence which we owe to 'em.

In Discoursing on this Subject, I shall first State the distinct Senses of the Word *World* in the Scripture.

2dly, Shew that there is a *Plurality* of Worlds in *Each* Sense of the Word, and,

3dly, I shall make a *Practical Improvement* of this Truth in a *different* way, according to the *Respective* Sense of the Word *World*, then under consideration ; wherein it may be taken in this Proposition, *There is a Plurality of Worlds*

CHAP. II. SECT. I.

The meaning of the Word World in Scripture explain'd, by an Enumeration of the several Senses of it There.

THE first thing to be done is to enumerate the different Ideas, which are denoted by this Term *World* in Scripture. No w sometimes by the Word *World* is meant the *Universe*, the *Entire* Combination of all the Works of God, at least that are yet in Being. But the Greek Word *Αἶον*, is never used thus.

2dly, By the Term *World* is meant *Restrictive*ly our *System* and the Inhabitants of it, by a *Synecdoche* of a part for the whole ; as when we read, *God so love d the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believed in him, shou'd not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

3dly, Sometimes by the *World* is meant *Temporations, Vices, Profane Principles and Maxims*

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Corrupt,

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Corrupt Customs, and Wicked Examples. Now, the *World* in this Sense of the Word varies; for in the Sense of Vices, and Corrupt Principles and Practices, there is as Numerous a *Plurality* of Worlds, as there is a diversity of *Heresies, Superstitions and Crimes* in being: And moreover, there is a *Plurality* of Worlds in the Sense of the Word for *Wicked Examples*, whether of Men, or of other Beings; for, we read in Scripture of an *Old World*, speaking of *Wicked Men* that liv'd before the Flood, as distinguish'd from those that liv'd in different Ages after it; and among the *fall'n Angels* there are distinctions of *Provinces*; they all belong to the Kingdom of the Air: But *some* in that black Empire are permitted to tempt Men Sojourning in Bodys here upon Earth; and *others* are order'd to Torture the Condemned Souls of the Wicked, that are turn'd out of their Bodies. *Evil Angels* are imprison'd in different Worlds of Misery, and exercise a Temporary Dominion over the Souls of Men there, with different Limitations of Power; in the same manner as *Good Angels* do Good Offices, some to the *Embodied Souls*, and others to the *Departing or Departed Souls* of Men. Both the blissful Kingdoms of Heaven, and the miserable Regions of the Air; may have not only divisions in them answerable to *Europe, Asia, Africa,* and *America* with us; but also their *Saturn, Mars, Mercury,* and other distinctions of that Sort, peculiar to themselves: For every Devil is not a *Lucifer*, or a *Beelzebub*; nor has every Good Angel the Territories, Province or Grandeur of a *Michael*, or a *Gabriel*: And by the 10th Chapter of the Prophet *Daniel*, the

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Good Angels seem Capable of an Innocent Contest, by way of generous Emulation for the Good of the Nations placed under their Charge, in a *Political Capacity*. But these are Assertions to be *Hinted*, not *Proved* in this place.

4thly, The Term *World* may signify a distinct, regular *Mass of Matter*, within different circumscrib'd Tracts of Space, built, prepar'd, and contriv'd by God for the Commodious Habitable, or Mansion of a Determinate Number of Creatures, of the same, or different Kinds.

5thly, It sometimes signifies a peculiar State, or Manner of Subsistence, preordain'd for the same Individual Beings; but very much diversify'd at every removal of 'em from one Region to another.

Lastly, It Denotes a different Dispensation of Light; and Religion, to the same Persons in the different Parts of their Life, (as the Jewish to Saul, and the Christian Dispensation was given to St. Paul;) or to different Beings, tho' of the same order and rank, living in different Ages, and Parts of the World. Thus the *Paradisaiacal* Dispensation was given to Adam, The *Post-lapsarian* to Abel, The *Patriarchal* to Abraham, The *Jewish* to Moses, the *Christian* to John the Baptist, and St. Peter in different Gradations; all these were different Dispersations of the true Religion, and equally Divine in their Ground-Work; but not communicated with an equal Lustre of Illumination, nor confirm'd and usher'd in by the same Pomp of Miracles, and Revelation of Mysteries.

CHAP. II. SECT. II.

Proofs from Scripture for every given Sense of the Word World in the foregoing Section.

I Have now Enumerated all the Senses of the Word *World* in the *Sacred Dialect*: and tho' I can prove a Plurality of Worlds in all the Foregiven Senses of the Word; yet I think it proper to premise, that the Scripture never speaks of Worlds directly in the Plural Number, in any but the Three last Senses of the Word: for this reason my Thoughts shall be principally lay'd out upon them; and therefore in the Process of my Discourse, I shall place *these* first, and the *rest* after them: Accordingly I pass on to produce places from Scripture, for every given Sense of the Word *World* in it's Order.

1st, Then, the Word *World* in Scripture signifies a distinct regular Mass of Matter, form'd in a determinate Tract of Space, built and prepar'd by God, for the Temporary or Perpetual Habitable of a certain Number of his Creatures, of the same or different Kinds.

In this Sense the Word must be taken, *Hebrews* the 11th, vers. the 3^d, *Through Faith we understand that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God.* The Word *Worlds* cannot here be understood of the different *States* of the same or diverse Creatures: it must signify *Material Orbs* or *Structures*, rear'd out of nothing by the Divine Omnipotence, and Commodiously contriv'd for the Dwelling Places of some of the *Animated Subjects* of the Creation. The Writer

ter of this Epistle had plainly the *Inanimate* Creation in his view ; and speaks here of *Buildings* and *Regions*, not of *Persons* ; he speaks of *Persons* afterwards, and begins with *Abel* the *First Person* after *Adam*, in the *Humane Class* of *Beings*.

In the same Sense must the Word be used by the same Writer, Chapter the I. verses the 1st. and 2d, *God who in sundry times and diverse manners spoke in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds.*

Thus also the Word is used in the 1st Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, Chapter the I. verse the 17th. *Now unto the King Eternal*, βασιλεῖ διώ-
νωι, which may as well, nay I think better be-
cause more naturally, be rendred the *King of Worlds*, tho' the *King of Ages* by an *Hebraism* signifies *Eternal* ; for the former rendring gives a greater Idea of God than the latter, and is more proper to be joyn'd with those *August* Epithets, *Immortal*, *Invisible*, the *only wise God*, which Immediately follow it.

2dly, The Term *World*, does sometimes Signify a *State*, rather than a *Place*, *Region*, or *Building*. In this Sense it refers to the diversify'd way of Subsistence, which the same Creatures enjoy in different Regions of the Universe. Thus it plainly signifies a State in that famous Text, in which our Saviour declares Matt. 12. ver. 31st. *That the Sin of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall neither be forgiven in this World, nor in that which is to come.* That is, neither during the Continuance of the Committers of it, in the present Scene of our

Souls, and their Incarnate manner of Subistence; nor in any new Theater, or gradation of *Conscious* Life, which is reserv'd for Man in a remoter Abode, and their future part of Duration. For some Sins God punishes Men with Judgments and Diseases *here*, tho' these are so Sanctify'd to them as to prevent their being Condemn'd *hereafter* for them; Thus *David's* Child must die, and *David* be punish'd by his Death, with a *Temporary* Grief and Disappointments, because by that Adulterous Issue from a Prince so Pious, *Saving in the Case of Uriah*, the Enemies of the Lord had been provoked to blaspheme; tho' at the same time God had put away his Sin, and resolv'd, upon the Account of his foreseen Repentance, that it shou'd not be imputed to him, in the Eternal State of his Soul. For other Sins God does not always punish in this Life, tho' in Case of final Impenitence he Inevitably punishes in the next: But the *Sin of Blasphemy* never passes unpunish'd, even in *this* Life; and unless Repentance intervene, (Supposing it be Capable to be Repented of *Savingly*) is more severely punish'd in the *Second*, and still more severely in the *Third* State of Humane Souls, notwithstanding any Punishments that have been inflicted in the first World of Souls, upon those who are Guilty of this *Portentous* Crime.

The Word also is Capable of *this* Sense without excluding *Another*, *Hebrews* the 6. ver. the 45th, *It is Impossible for those that are once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the Good Word of God, and the Powers of*
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the World to come; if they shall fall away to re-
new them again to Repentance. By the World to
come, some here understand not the Invisible
World of Souls, but the Christian Dispensation
of Religion, in Correspondence with its mean-
ing, Chap. the 11. vers. the 5th. They tasted
the Powers of the World to come, say our Modern
Interpreters, in seeing the Miracles wrought
by Christ and his Apostles in the beginning of
the Christian Dispensation; and it was this
Circumstance that render'd the recovery of
those Apostates Morally Impossible, because
they cou'd not have a brighter Demonstration
of the Divinity of the Christian Religion,
than they had by being Eye, and Ear-Wit-
nesses of the many Miracles which God had
wrought by the Apostles, for the Confirmation
of their Faith. This I confess is a very Pious
Explication of this Scripture, and worthy of
all regard: But according to the fulness of
several expressions in Sacred Writings, the
World to come may in this and other Passages
of the New Testament, have Two or Three
Senses at once; where the taking it in one
Sense, does not lay down a proposition, that in-
volves it in an Inconsistency with the Asser-
tions maintain'd thereby, whilst it is taken in
other Senses. Thus here the World to come may
both signify the Christian Dispensation, and the
future State of Holy Men withall; since they
who saw the Miracles wrought by the Apostles,
and were once Converted to Christianity by
that sight, found so great a change wrought
in themselves, throughout the whole Frame
and Temper of their Affections; by the Holy
Spirit of God; that in the Peace and Sancti-
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fi'd Transports of their own Minds, they had Presages of the Consolations of the *Righteous dead* in the Invisible World ; and were rais'd to such Degrees of *Faith, Plerophory, and Contempt of this World*, as resembled, and made bold Approaches to the Happiness of *Sight*, and the Heavenly Temper, and the Independent Subsistence of Good Men in the next.

By *World* also we must understand a State, *Luke* 20. verses 34. 35, 36. *The Children of this World Marry, and are given in Marriage : but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Resurrection from the Dead, neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage ; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the Children of God, being the Children of the Resurrection.* My Reader can't but observe here a plain Opposition of the present to the future State of Souls. *Matth.* the 13. ver. 38. We meet with this Passage, *The World is the Field*, that is, the Field in this Parable figures out to you the present State of Tryal enjoy'd by Men. In like manner it must be Interpreted in the 39th ver. of this Chap. where we find these Words, *The Harvest is the End of the World ;* for that Harvest will put an End, not only to the State of *Humane Souls*, during their Union to *Corruptible Bodies* ; but also to that State wherein they live till the *General Resurrection*, whilst their Souls are dislog'd and absent from such Bodies.

3dly, The Term *World* sometimes denotes a *Dispensation of Religion* ; for so *Hebrews* the 3d, and the 5th, by the *World to come* is meant the *Christian Dispensation* ; when the Apostle says, *unto the Angels he hath not put in Subjection*
the

Of a Plurality of Worlds.

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the World to come, whereof we speak. This World to come is *Christianity*, distinguish'd from the *Jewish Religion*, call'd ver. the 2d, the Word spoken by Angels. The Jewish Dispensation was so call'd, because the *Majestick* presence of God was represented with great Terror, by an Host of Angels upon Mount *Sinai*, at the giving of the Law into the Hands of *Moses*; whereas the Christian Law was deliver'd by the personal Preaching of *Christ*, by his Sermons on Sacred Record, and by the *Living* and *Dead Labours* of the Apostles, after they had been Visited on the Day of *Pentecost*, with the Supernatural Gifts and Assistances of the Holy Ghost. The Christian Dispensation is call'd the *World to come*, because it was future to the *Patriarchs* who liv'd before *Moses*, and to the Devout *Jews*, that liv'd after him till the Birth of *Christ*, and the Preaching of *John the Baptist*.

The Word *World* seems to be Capable of this Sense, (tho' at the same time it admits of another consistently with it) in the 3d Chapter of *St Pauls Epistle* to the *Ephesians*, ver. the 11th, as will appear by Reading the Three foregoing verses, ver. the 8th, *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I shou'd Preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ; and to make all Men see, what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places might be known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God, according to the Eternal Purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: the*
Words

Words here rendred according to the *Eternal purpose*, are in the Original Greek, Κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων, according to the fore-ordination of *Ages*; or according to the fore-ordain'd Series of *Worlds*: By which *Worlds* or *Ages* may be very Conveniently understood the several Dispensations of the True Religion, which God hath been pleas'd to Communicate to Mankind under the Conduct of the Mediator Jesus Christ, before and since his Incarnation; for by God's ordaining a Plurality of *Worlds* in this, as well as in other Senses, the πολυποίκιλος σοφία Θεοῦ, The manifold or diversify'd Wisdom of God, hath been very Signally display'd; for tho' God in these last Days, wherein our Happy Lot of sojourning here below is cast, hath spoken unto us by his own Son; yet he spake unto the Fathers (the Predecessors of the Faithful) before the Birth of Christ, in sundry manners, as well as at diverse times, Hebrews 1. 1. But this Topick shall be Illustrated in its due place, where it will be more proper to enlarge upon it.

The last proof I shall bring for this Sense of the Word is from the 9 Chapter to the Hebrews, verses 24, 25, 26. Christ is not enter'd into the Holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven it self; now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he shou'd offer himself often, as the High Priest enter'd into the Holy Place every Year, with the Blood of others: For then must he often have suffered since the Foundation of the World: But now once in the end of the World, hath he appear'd to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων, our Version has it in the End of the World, but it may be english'd, in the compleat Consum-

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Consummation and Period of all Dispensations.

Proofs having been brought for the *Three* first given Senses of the Word *World* in Scripture, which will principally Employ the thoughts of my Design, I shall now produce instances of other uses of this Word *there*.

Now 4thly, The Word *World* sometimes is used for the whole Universe or Combination of Beings, that have been produced by the Omnipotence of God. We meet with this Sense of it, 1 Peter 1. 18. *Ye were not redeem'd with Corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Conversation receiv'd by Tradition from your Fathers; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot; who verily was fore-ordin'd before the Foundation of the World.*

Our Blessed Lord in his Prayer for his Disciples, a little before his last Passion uses this Word in no less an extent of Signification, St. John xvii. ver. 5. *O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.*

St. Paul uses it in as Comprehensive a Latitude, when he speaks to the Beleivers of the Church of Corinth in the following manner, *All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come,* 1 Cor. 3. 22.

It may be taken thus in that famous Exposition, which Christ is said to have used so often with his Disciples, *What will it profit a Man to gain the whole World and lose his own Soul?*

St. John takes in as much Compass in the use of this Word, in that *Hyperbole* which concludes his Gospel, Chap. xxi. ver. 25. *There are also many*

many other things which Jesus did, the which if they shou'd be written every one, I suppose that even the World it self cou'd not contain the Books that shou'd be written.

Further, The Word *World* occurs in a fifth Sense, denoting restrictively our System and the Inhabitants of it. Thus we read, *John iii. 17.* God sent not his Son into the *World* to condemn the *World*; but that the *World* through him might be saved: so *Chap. i. ver. 9, 10.* That was the true light, that lighteth every Man that cometh into the *World*. He was in the *World*, and the *World* was made by him, and the *World* knew him not. 'Twere an endless Task to heap together all those Passages, in which this Word has evidently the same meaning. Hence we read so often of the Prince of this *World*, *John 12. 31.* Now is the Judgment of this *World*, Now shall the Prince of this *World* be cast out: it may be sufficient to refer you to one more, *Again the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high Mountain, and sheweth him all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them: and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me, Mat. iv. 8.*

Lastly, In Scripture the ill gotten honours, and riches, and pleasures of this Scene, the base means of getting them, and the corrupt examples and customs of it, are character'd by the Denomination of the *World*. Among the Innumerable Instances that may be brought to this purpose, I shall content my self with these few, *Joh. xv. 18.* If the *World* hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you; if ye were of the *World*, the *World* wou'd love his own: but because you are not of the *World*, but I have chosen you out of the *World*, therefore the *World* hateth you. The first Epistle
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of John ii. 15. Love not the World. Chap. 5. Verse iv. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World, and, this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith, Rom. xii. 2. Be not conformed to this World.

C H A P. III.

Proving a Plurality of Worlds.

S E C T. I.

The Entrance laying down the General Scheme of proving a Plurality of Worlds, in all senses of the Word World.

HAVING first laid down in general all the Scripture Senses of the Word *World*, and brought a Competent Number of Proofs for every one of them in particular, I pass on to my next Article of discourse, which is to prove that *there is a Plurality of Worlds*, in all the fore-mention'd Senses of the Word.

Now this Proof will be full and compleat, if upon enquiry it shall be found to appear that,

1st, *There is a Plurality of Visible, or Material Worlds*; for that will take in the Sense of the Word, wherein it signifies a distinct Orb, or Structure of matter, for the Accommodation of a set Number of Living Creatures,

2dly, *There is a Plurality of Angelical Worlds*, or a Succession of different States fore-ordain'd for the Holy Angels,

3dly,

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3dly, *There is a Plurality of Diabolical Worlds, or a Succession of different States fore-ordain'd for the fal'n Angels.*

4thly, *There is a Plurality of Humane Worlds, or a Succession of diverse States fore-ordain'd for the Souls of Men. These Three last Pluralities being clearly proved, will effectually prove a Plurality of Worlds in the use of the Word for a State.*

5thly, *There is a Plurality of Political Worlds, in a Confederated Combination against the Interest and Glory of the Kingdom of Jesus: for the use of the Word World for the Temptations and Corrupt Practices and Examples of it, will of Course fall under our Consideration under this Head.*

6thly, *There is a Plurality of Worlds in the Terrestrial System of the Creation; for this will prove it in the Sense of its denoting our present Scene.*

7thly, *That God's Administration of his Church hath been very much diversify'd, by his different ways and degrees of revealing his Mind to Mankind; for this will prove a Plurality of Worlds in the Sense of a Dispensation of true Religion.*

Lastly, *That there is an Intellectual Universe in the Infinite Mind of God, as well as a visible Universe, in the Stupendous Mass of Matter, and Indefinite Tracts of Space; which are indeed in the Sum Total of Systems, whereof the whole Creation Consists; for this will prove a Plurality of Worlds even in the Signification of an Universe.*

Wherefore according to the System proposed, I shall make it my business to prove,

A 1st,

1st, A Plurality of *Visible* or *Material* Worlds.

2^{dly}, A Plurality of *Angelical* Worlds.

3^{dly}, A Plurality of *Diabolical* Worlds.

4^{thly}, A Plurality of *Human* Worlds.

5^{thly}, A Plurality of *Dispensative* or *Religious* Worlds.

6^{thly}, A Plurality of *Political* Worlds.

7^{thly}, A Plurality of *Terrestrial* Worlds.

Lastly, A Plurality of *Universal* Worlds.

C H A P. III.

S E C T. II.

*A Plurality of Visible or Material Worlds,
Proved from several Considerations.*

THE order of thinking prefix'd, obliges me to prove in this Part of my Work, a Plurality of *Visible* or *Material* Worlds.

First then, the Division of the *Material Universe* into such a vast Number of distinct Orbs, encourages us to Conclude them peopled with distinct Sets of Creatures. Tho' every one of these Orbs in unknown ways, and by Pipes and Channels of very subtile Matter, may have some Beneficial or Malignant Influence upon ours, and all the rest that are in being; as it is plain, that the *Sun*, *Moon* and several other Heavenly Bodies, evidently have upon the Orb we live and breath in. (And thus all things may be said to be made for the Use, Service, and Benefit of Man in some degree, even in his present State.) And tho', notwithstanding their having such contrariant and diversify'd Motions peculiar to themselves; they

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they have an inseperable dependance on one another in a general Motion, wherein they center throughout the whole Expansion of the Universe; yet since we find that all those Orbs, which are dispersed throughout the Firmament, and strike our *Sight* and *Thought* with so much Wonder and Pleasure, are inaccessible to the Inhabitants of our own; we *cannot*, we *must not*, conceive them fram'd meerly for the sake of affording those Conveniences, which we, who dwell here, receive from them, either in our *Mental*, or our *Animal* Capacity. Were we the only Persons interested in their Existence and Motions, why shou'd they all be made so impervious to our Persons, as they are even the nearest of them? For, our Bodies are entirely deny'd access to them, and Thinking gives our *Minds* but an imperfect, Dream-like presence in them. Why does the Wit of Man in the Study of Astronomy find out so little certain Knowledge of them? Since therefore such *Impassable* Gulfs are fixt between their *Atmospheres* and ours, we have Just Grounds to apprehend, that all these Collections of Matter are thus parcell'd out into distinct and incommunicable Regions, and do form those innumerable beautiful Orbs, for the separate Accommodation of divers kinds and orders of Creatures, or for the reception of the same Creatures in different States. How unreasonable is it to conceive, that *one* Orb only, among so many Thousands of them, shou'd be inhabited, and the rest contain no Creatures able to contemplate the Works of God, and to praise him for his Beneficence? Men don't build stately Palaces for the meer pleasure of gazing at them;

them : which way then can we obtain of our selves to conceive, that a Mind, able to project and rear such an amazing number of *Cosmical Fabricks*, shou'd bring them into being, only to be stared at with an imperfect View and Theory, by the Eyes and Minds of some living Creatures crouded into one of the least Orbs of them all.

2dly, Not only their *Number*, but the *Bulk* and *Extent* of their respective Circumferences, make it reasonable to conclude, that they are inhabited : they are most of them more capacious and receptive of Inhabitants than this Orb, and without doubt far finer Countries to live in. What then need hinder our being perswaded, that they are the residence and abode of higher Creatures, than our selves ? or of Men in a more improved and advanced Condition ? hath not the Builder of all things made them all in *Number, Weight and Measure* ? Can we think that he, who hath brought so many magnificent Globes into view, drain'd his Power, or exhausted his Counsels and Ideas, in finishing those Structures of polish'd Matter ; or in furnishing out our Earth with proper Inhabitants ? Let us but observe and recollect the vast variety of Creatures, and the innumerable Gradations of Life, that appear both upon the Surface, and in the Bowels of our Earth, and Sea. All living Things here are not *Co-ordinate*. The Souls that People our Orb, are as distant some from others, and all of them as distinguishable, even the most resembling amongst themselves, as the lifeless Productions and Contents of it ; there is a prodigious Fecundity of Divine Ideas apparent in the Formation of those manifold

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Classes of animated Creatures, which dwell in it ; and the intermediate Scale and Chain of sensitive Beings, that extends from the highest Soul among Men, to the lowest dwindling Glimpses of Life, which sparkle in those Creatures which Crawl upon the Earth, is of a very great Length and Breadth ; let our thinking be never so much at a loss for a competent Variety of Creatures throughout all the Divisions of the Universe, we have no occasion to be solicitous for the success of an infinite Mind in this difficult Undertaking. 'Tis as easy to him to *people*, as to *build* them ; *Omnipotence* is an unexhaustible Fund of *Souls*, as well as of *Matter* ; Innumerable *Species* of *Angels* and *Men* cost him no more trouble, than the innumerable *Luminaries* of the Firmament ; and if they be destitute of Inhabitants, we shall be at a Loss for the Rules of Analogy in the great *Drama*, and Platform of his Designs: *Number* will then swallow up *Weight* and *Measure* in his Works. Without the Word of God, no *Lilys* had adorn'd and perfumed the *Surface* of the *Earth* ; nor had any Veins of Silver and Gold, enrich'd the *Bowels* of it. Now God makes an *Orb* by bare Will and Word, as soon as a *Flower* ; the *Cherubim* and *Seraphim*, stand him in no more expence than *Spires* of *Grass*, and *Myriads* of them are made by him with the same ease as *One*. His Invention will never be in pain to find out a wanted *Species* ; For he spoke, and all the *Hosts* of *Heaven* were made ; he Commanded, and they were Created ; by his Blessing, *Nothing* became *Something* at first ; and all Original Samples of Creatures have *Increased* and *Multiply'd* afterwards. But indeed recourse to God's Om-

Omnipotence is not absolutely necessary in this Affair ; for 'tis very certain that,

3dly, Our own Ideas of Gods Works, may go a great way towards Peopling the Orbs of the Universe of the Almighty ; tho' they were Ten Thousand times more Numerous than they are already. For indeed the Scale of Being, that begins from the Mind of Man, and reaches to the highest Created Mind that can be conceiv'd, (tho' that Mind be not great enough to Vye with its Creator) will fill all the Glorious Orbs above us with ease : but Gods *Ideas* are as much more *Prolific*, as they are more *regular* and *powerful*, than ours. Besides,

4thly, Let us consider *Good-Angels*, *Fal'n-Angels*, and the *Souls* of Men ordain'd for three different States, and Transplantings from one Orb to another in Succession ; and let us withal Consider and Calculate, how many Colonies of Humane Souls have already been remov'd hence from the Death of *Adam*, to our own Time ; how many in the whole Earth are daily removing, and how many more will be remov'd from this Interval to the Day of Judgment ; which (tho' our particular Judgment may be near) may not be for some Thousands of Years ; and we shall be less at a Loss still for stocking those Orbs with Dwellers to enjoy them. Moreover,

5thly, We ought to consider that there is a vast diversity of Order and Dignity among the Good-Angels ; nor are all Devils of the same Figure and Species : Tho' they are both call'd by a *General Name* of *Angels* and *Devils*, in Divine Writ. For the same Scriptures distribute both the Holy and Apostate Angels,

into various Ranks and Classes, under the distinction of *Thrones, Principalities, Might, and Dominions*. Now by that time all these Beings are disposed of into Suitable Habitacles and Mansions, the upper Orbs will not appear so thin and desolate of inhabitants, as some have imagin'd; whilst our lower Spot of Gods Creation is so Full and Populous. Some Orbs may be allotted for *Mortal*, others for *Immortal* Creatures; again, some may be appointed for Immortal Creatures in their *First* State; others for them in their *Second*; and others for their Accommodation in their *Last*, and most perfected Condition of their Subsistence. Some are Orbs of *Trial*, others are Orbs of *Reward*; and some may be the Prisons and Confinements of Condemned Spirits: one Orb differs from another in its use, consider'd as a Receptacle of living Creatures; as *one Star differs from another in Glory*. *Infants* and *Common Christians* will not probably have Mansions in Common, with *Martyrs* and *Confessors*; nor honest or dishonest *Pagans*, have their dwelling in Common with *Holy* or *Wicked Patriarchs, Jews* and *Christians*: And since so great a part of those Orbs may be Peopled with pure Spirits, and Souls released from Bodies; we may be easy about the Suitableness of those dwellings, to the Constitution of the Inhabitants. Spirits and Souls may dwell, where we can't; and 'tis certain they all dwell some where as well as we. For tho' Spirits and Souls are not so Confin'd to any place, as Bodies are, yet they are Confin'd in some Degree to Place; for the greater perfection of their Nature beyond what Body doth enjoy, doth not equal them with God, nor cloath them

them with *Omnipresence*. God may make *certain* Orbs or Tracts of Space, the Scenes of more sprightly Operations to the highest Angels, and the Occasions of more entertaining Ideas to them, which no other Orbs can afford them: and thus they may be said to dwell in them, as humane Souls do in Bodies, whilst here upon the Earth; tho' at the same time they may be present, in a lower Degree of presence, by Virtue of Thought and Memory in other places. For *Thought* will not be perfectly excluded from any place; however it does not render those that think *perfectly present* in every place: so that every Spirit is more perfectly present in some place, than he is in any other; tho' he is not so Nail'd down to that place in his Operations, as a Body is confin'd to this or that determinate circumscription of Space; nor is an Angel or Spirit so slow in its Motion from *Orb* to *Orb*: for Souls fly faster than a Bullet from a Cannon, or Rays from the Sun. Every thinking Substance has *Two Sorts of Presence*: One may be call'd its *Actual*; the other its *Virtual Presence*. The *Actual Presence* of a *thinking Substance* answers to the Presence of the Soul of Man, in that place where his Body is present too: The *Virtual presence* of a Spirit is like the presence of a *Geographer*, or *Historian*, in the *Indies*, describing that Place in a *Book* or *Map*, whilst he's united to a Body Seated and Breathing in *France* or *England*. 'Tis thus that Angels and Devils are capable of *Local Presence*, and are said to *inhabit* a Country, when they Act and Think, and Resolve, with a larger Sphere of Activity, and with more affecting Vehemence, in certain Regions than others. Shou'd there-

fore some Orbs be made of Matter in Motion, like the Matter of Metals Melted in a Furnace, yet it need not affect those Spirits with the Tormentful Sensation of Burning, as it wou'd our Souls if present in them, whilst united to Bodies of Flesh. Such a circumstance wou'd not argue the said Orbs uninhabitable to Spirits of an higher Order than our selves; nor possibly to our own Souls, when dismiss'd from their present State; tho' it wou'd argue them uninhabitable to us in the present Composition of our Person. God may by the Arbitrary Rules of his Sovereignty make such Globes of Liquid Fire, the Receptacles of happy Souls, and Occasions of Transporting Pleasure to them: Or if they shou'd affect those that are confin'd to them with the Tormentful Sensation of burning, That wou'd not prove them un-inhabited, but inhabited by the Criminals of Gods Creation.

Nay further, 6thly, There may be several sorts of Souls joyn'd to Bodies, but not like ours, nor so affected by their Bodies as ours are; since the Intercourse, which is constantly held between the Passions of the Soul and the Actings of the Body, seems rather to be of an *Arbitrary Institution*, than to arise from any *necessary Relation* between the *Ideas* and *Positions* of the *Soul*, and the *Temper* and *Motions* of the *Body*. All Configurations of Matter don't Constitute Flesh, nor is all Flesh of the same kind; for *there is one kind of Flesh of Birds, another of Fishes, another of Beasts*: In like manner every Composition of matter, or even of *Flesh*, United to a Created Mind, does not Constitute *Humanity*: Nor do every Mind and Body United

ted together, necessarily feel the same mutual diversified *Reaction* one upon the other, as the Mind and the Body of a *Man* do find in themselves, under certain diversified *States, Tempers,* and *Motions*, in the one and in the other. Wherefore we may very well suppose some Orbs stock'd with Minds join'd to *animated* Structures of Matter, without supposing *Pre-adamites*, or Men living in the Moon and other Planets, as we do upon the Earth; because they may be join'd to one another upon different Terms of Union, and Laws of Sympathy, and reciprocal Operation, from what we experience passing in our selves. Upon the Bodies of some Creatures compounded of Mind and Matter, Fire may make as agreeable an Impression; as fine Air, and serene Gales of Wind, or the moderate Heat of the Sun, do make upon the Bodies of Men. Wherefore a certain famous Author does not at all confute or overthrow what I am endeavouring to establish upon a Rock; tho' he should have the good luck to hit right in his Conjectures concerning the *Planetary* Worlds, when he saith that this Water of our Earth would in *Saturn* and *Jupiter* be frozen up immediately, and in *Venus* and *Mercury* it would be evaporated; and concludes that every *Planet* must have its Waters of such a Temper, as to be proportioned to its Heat. My assertion sits very firm, and will make a very good shift to live, tho' *Jupiter's* or *Saturn's* Waters be of such a Nature, or not of such a Nature, as not to be liable to Frost; and whether the Waters of *Venus* and *Mercury* be capable, or incapable of being easily evaporated by the Sun. We need not

not be hard put to it for People in all the Orbs of Heaven ; tho' possibly the Heat of the Sun be nine times greater in *Mercury*, than with us ; and 'tis twice as hot in *Venus*, as with us ; and the Light and Heat in *Mars* be sometimes in two, and sometimes in three Degrees less, than in ours. If *Jupiter* should have but the five and twentieth Part of the Light and Heat, that we receive from the *Sun*, and *Saturn* but the hundredth Part ; yet according to the Scheme laid down in these Papers, it neither of them need want Inhabitants. In like manner, neither the *Moon*, nor the *Satellites* moving about *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, shall despair of being peopled ; tho' some *Selenographies* will not allow them Seas, or Rivers, or Clouds, or Atmospheres, or Vapours, or any kind of Waters. What tho' the time of Light and Darkness there, be equal to fifteen of our Days ; yet their Constitution, in any part of the *Lunar Planet*, defends them compleatly from being burnt up in the longest Days ; and those who live under the very *Poles* of it need not be pinched to Death with Cold ; as our Whalefishers are about *Iseland* or *Nova Zembla* in the Summer time. Nor would Summers and Winters of fifteen Years length, render the *Moons* or *Satellites* of *Saturn* uninhabitable to Creatures so and so constituted, at the same time as it may render them uninhabitable to our selves, in the present state and temperament of our Persons.

I am very free to grant that the Stars (supposing they be not inhabited,) may be of great Benefit and Usefulness to the World, without ascribing *Astrological* Influences to them ; since they serve to keep the circumjacent Air or

Ether

Ether in Motion, which otherwise would congeal or stagnate; and to maintain that perpetual Circulation of fluid Matter, which passes from Orb to Orb thro' the Universe, and gives Life to all things. 'Tis hence that we have so much Light constantly supplied at the same time, as so much seems to be wasted: Nevertheless, these and many other wise ends of God in creating them, may be answered as well, if they are inhabited, as if they were not inhabited: their being inhabited makes them capable of answering many more gracious Designs, than if they were not inhabited. Our Knowledge of the *Satellites* hath assisted us to rectify Geography, and to determine the Longitude of Places: but this Benefit receiv'd from them, under the Notion of their not being inhabited, contracts our Contemplation of Providence; whereas nothing, on the contrary, does more enlarge our Admiration of God, than the Belief of their being fill'd with many Hosts of thinking Substances seated in them in diversified Circumstances, and glorifying and serving God with a vast Variety of *Specifick* and *Personal* Faculties. Let not therefore, the *Habitableness* of other Orbs stand or fall in our Conceptions, by their Agreeableness or Disagreeableness to our Make and State. The *Habitableness* of an Orb is not grounded in its being agreeable to every, or to our *Specifick Constitution of Nature*; but in its being agreeable to the Frame and Nature of the Beings, planted by Providence in this or that determinate Orb.

There are Orbs habitable to *Good* Angels, which would not be so to *Bad* Ones: there are Orbs habitable to the *Separate Souls* of the Just, which

which would not be so to the same Souls, whilst join'd to organiz'd Structures of Flesh. By what particular Beings these and those particular Orbs are inhabited, we know not; but this we know, that every Orb is so framed and contrived by God, as to be an ἱστον οἰκητιέων, a *fitable Dwelling-place* to the Beings appointed to dwell in them; just as in St. *Jude's* Phrase, the Place and State in which the fallen Angels were first planted, was such to them. Upon this foot the Proposition, which I propos'd to prove, stands firm.

As therefore in our *Terraqueous Globe*, we see every Element *Land, Waters and Air*, full of living Creatures, adapted in the Make of their Bodies to the *Medium* they are to breath in: so we may with sound Reason presume, that all the Regions and Divisions of the *Material Universe* are replenish'd with Hosts of Intellectual Creatures, so constituted in their Respective Natures, as to be proper to be settled in some of them for a *longer or shorter Tract of Time*; in others of them *for ever*. All which Beings and Worlds inhabited by them are placed in a most beautiful Arrangement. Hence God by the Prophet *Isaiah* is so often styled, the *Lord of Hosts*: Hence his Character shines so bright, not only as he is a *God Glorious in Holyness*; but also as *fearful*, (or venerable) in the *Praises of Thousands of Thousands*, and *Ten thousand times ten thousands of understanding Creatures*; and, as *Doing Wonders* in spacious Theatres, the Bounds whereof cannot be assign'd, and the Number whereof cannot be computed, but by his own infinite and all-comprehending Mind.

Thus

Thus far *Reason* hath directed us : By its Help alone we know, that God is infinitely Wise, and infinitely Powerful, and of exuberant Goodness in all his Works and Proceedings : And a Serious consideration of the said infinite Power and Wisdom of God, added to our Observation of the Number, Situation, and Bulk of the Heavenly Orbs, has obliged us to believe that there are Conscious Beings residing in them ; doing Honour to his *Holiness*, and *Vindictive Justice* in some of them, by the Tormenting Punishments which they undergo for their impenitent Sinfulness in a foregoing State ; or doing Honour to his Goodness and Mercy in others of them by the Rewards, which they there receive for Dutiful, Thankful and Faithful improvements of the Talents in a former State ; or else fitting themselves for a State of Recompences in a Probationary Capacity. But we Christians have an higher Light, and a surer Guide to walk by ; and that is the Reveal'd Will and Word of God, to which we ought to attend with all diligent Care and profoundest Reverence. Wherefore let us Examine those *Holy Books* : Let us search and try, whether such a Multitude of Worlds can be any where found, among the Contents of these Life-giving *Oracles* of God.

C H A P. III. S E C T. III.

Proofs brought from Scripture for a Plurality of Visible and Material Worlds.

OUR Souls hereafter will Travel into new and more perfect States of Being, where they will have a more delightful and familiar Prospect of the Stupendous Fabricks which God hath erected. In the mean while we must acquiesce in seeing them thro' Telescopes: But some Glasses are better than others: The Glas of Reason and Gods Works here below, give us some fainter Glymps of them; but the Glas of Gods Word is Truer and Exacter in the discoveries it makes of them. This represents them more Numerous, than either the bare Eye of the Body, or of the Mind, or of both together, could have found out; and shews them full of Glorious Inhabitants. For as we read in the Ancient Book of *Job*, *Is there any Number of his Armies?* And again we read in one of the *Prophets*; *He brings forth his Hosts without Number*: And as the Number of them there appears to be *Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand*, and *Thousands of Thousands*, and to vye with the Drops of the Ocean, and the Sands of the Sea-Shore: so their *Splendour* and *Power* is not inferiour to their Number; for they shine bright as the Stars inhabited by them, and their Species and several Kinds bear the Character of *Mights*, *Principalities* and *Dominions*. *Dignity* is Stamp'd and Written upon the very Names of most of the Orders,
by

by which they are distinguish'd among themselves ; and tho' all *Heavens* are Stately Structures, yet some are more August and Spacious than others : For we read of the *Heaven of Heavens* ; *Psal.* 148. 4. And, *Heavens* in the *Plural* is a more usual expression, than *Heaven* in the Singular Number ; some will be, and some will not be dissolved : Some will decay, and others will be improv'd, enlarg'd and perfected : For there are *Comets* and *Planets*, as well as *fixed Stars*. 'Tis so with the Beings planted in them. All the *Sons of God*, are not the *Sons of the Morning* ; *Angels*, like *Stars*, differ from one another in *Glory* : They differ thus by their *Standing*, by their *State*, by their *Native* and *Acquired Lustre* : And God giveth to every *Order*, and to every *Person* among them, their *respective Differences*, as it pleaseth him. Every *Specific* and *Personal Characteristic* of *Eminence* among them, throughout all their *Classes*, redounds to the *Glory* of that *Supreme Mind*, who rules in the *Armies of Heaven and Earth*, and is the *Authour* of, not only their *Being*, but of their *Illustrious Graces* and *Endowments*.

In his sight the Splendideſt *Heavens* are unclean : but the most obscure *Orb* in the *Universe* deserves our observance, and is an ample *Theatre of Instruction* and *Divine Amusement* to our *Thoughts*. For tho' God dwells Incircled in a *Light*, which no *Being* can approach ; yet he humbleth himself to behold and superintend the least of all the *Heavens* ; yea our *Earth* it self, with a kind and watchful inspection ; and there is no *Orb*, wherein the *Works* and *Wonders* of his *Providence* are not great
and

and marvellous, and well worth our inquiring into the Events and Oeconomy of them, so far as we can know them; tho' they are unsearchable and past our finding out to perfection, by our most laborious and quick-sighted Researches. What may be known by devout, modest and diligent Consultation of the *Bible*, will richly reward the Labour of our Studies.

Tho' the *Highest* and the *Purest* Angels stand charg'd before God with *Defects* and *Levity*, and the *Evil* ones appear stain'd with *Folly*; *both sorts* of them are useful Objects of Contemplation and Faith to us, and proposed to our Notice, for our Spiritual Benefit in the Sacred Records. The Persecutions of the good, and the Fall of the bad Angels, are mention'd in them for our Instruction: Our Devotion, our Humility, our Charity, and our Hope, may be very much improved by serious Meditations upon the various Regions inhabited by them, and the Diversity of their State in different Orbs, and during the different parts of their Stay and Duration in them. With this View, and with this good Design, let us consider the particular Texts, which prove and illustrate the fore-conceiv'd Plurality of Habitable Orbs.

And first, let us take Notice of the mention of a Plurality of Worlds, in the two first verses of the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son; whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds.* Now to know what sort of Worlds these are; whether inhabited

habited or not inhabited ; let us read the 3d
 vers. *who being the brightness of his Glory, and
 the Express Image of his Person, and Upholding
 all things by the Word of his Power, when he had
 by himself prov'd our Sins, Sat down on the Right
 hand of the Majesty on High ; Being made so much
 better than the Angels ; as he hath by Inheritance
 obtain'd a more excellent Name than they.* The
 Apostle here makes it his business to describe
 the excellency of our Saviour's Person, and
 proves him a Divine Person from the Immense
 extent of his *Duration* and *Dominion* ; this he
 makes to appear, from his Creating and Pre-
 serving of all, and consequently of the *Angeli-
 cal* Worlds ; which are a Noble part of them ;
 For 'tis thence, that he Concludes the Superio-
 rity of *Christ*, to the Angels themselves ; nay
 and withal the Supreme Power and Command,
 which he exerciseth over all the *Hosts* and *Hie-
 rarchies* of them. The Worlds therefore, which
 were made, and are still upheld by *Christ*, are
 not desolate *Chasms*, or mis-shapen Masses of
 Matter ; nor well turn'd and Regular Orbs of
 it without Inhabitants ; but Beautiful and Po-
 pulous *Cosms*, stock'd with proper Complements
 of Noble Creatures. And for our further
 Satisfaction in this matter, the *Margin* of our
English Bibles, refers us to, Col. 1. 16. as a
 Synonymous Passage of Scripture, proper to
 Illustrate this, under our immediate Considera-
 tion ; for there St. Paul speaks upon the same
 Topic, and with the same design in his Eye af-
 ter this manner ; *by him, (namely, Christ, call'd
 before the Image of the Invisible God, and the
 first-Born of every Creature) were all things Created,
 that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth ; visi-*

ble and invisible ; whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers ; all things were Created by him, and for him : And he is before all things, and by him all things Consist : And he is the Head of the Body, the Church ; who is the Beginning, the first-Born from the Dead, that in all things he might have the Pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell ; and (having made Peace through the Blood of the Cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him I say, whether they be things in Earth, or things in Heaven : The distribution here of things into things in Heaven, and things in Earth, plainly implies the Heavens peopled, as well as the Earth : The opposition of *Visible* to *Invisible* things, does as plainly argue, that some Orbs are peopled with *Simple Spirits*, and others with *Spirits joyn'd to Bodies* of different Kinds : The distinction of *Thrones* and *Dominions*, and among simple Spirits, is an Argument of Inferiority and Superiority among these simple Spirits : In short, it proves that there are Classes of Hierarchies among the Inhabitants of the Heavenly Regions. By the things in Heaven, reconciled unto the Father by the Cross of Christ, may be understood the then departed Souls of the Faithful, planted in several of the Heavenly Orbs.

Again, 2dly, In the Eleventh Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and the Third verse, we find this Ample Proof of a Plurality of habitable Orbs. *Thro' Faith we understand, that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.* The meaning of which Words is, as follows ; Those Orbs above, whose

Sur-

Of a Plurality of Worlds.

35

Surfaces strike the Eye of our Bodies, were (as surely as our own Orb, and the Visible Productions and Contents of it,) struck into the *Sensible* Being they now enjoy, out of the *Energetic* Ideas and Perfections of the Omnipotent Deity: Tho' these *Ideas* and Perfections of God are not *sensibilia*, things that affect or fall upon the Organs of our grosser Sensations; but are the pure Objects of Mind, and can be seen and contemplated only by the Eye of an Understanding Principle: 'Tis the *Understanding* of Man dwelling in this World, and the Understanding of Angels and other Spirits plac'd in Superiour Worlds, that in different Degrees of Knowledge are acquainted with the *Number*, *Distance*, *Bulk*, *Situation*, *Form*, and *Motions* of all those *Orbicular* Bodies of Matter, which God hath so wonderfully Establish'd in *Seas* of *Ether*; that tho' they are surrounded with Interspers'd Voids, want no Pillars to keep them from falling, and to support the Compactness of their Frame, and the Regularity of their Courses, and Respective Situations: The Beings also, which inhabit them; their several *States* and *Circumstances*; the *Polity* and *Administration*, to which they are subject, are known and discern'd by *Faith*, and not by *Sight*. Our Eye cannot see *them*, as we do *Princes* and *Potentates*, or the *Courts* and *Palaces* of the Earth: But the *Mind* by *Faith* sees the *God*, that made them; the *Angels* and *Translated Souls*, that dwell in them; and the *Spring* and the *Treasures* of Knowledge; *Wisdom* and *Joy*, wherein those Nobler Scenes abound.

3dly, In the 1st. Chap. to the Colos. ver. 26. we read of the *Mystery*, which hath been hid from *Ages*, and from *Generations*, but is now made manifest to the *Saints*: The Words rendred from *Ages*, in the Greek are *ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων*, which may be Translated from *Worlds*: Now certainly in this Place by *Worlds*, must be meant *Worlds inhabited by Conscious and Intellectual Beings*; for such *Worlds*, I humbly conceive, are more concern'd in the Concealment and Revelation of *Mysteries*, than *Ages*, or *uninhabited Orbs* of Matter.

4thly, St. Paul's Thanksgiving, Eph. 1. 3. must not be here over look'd. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath Blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings, in Heavenly Places in Christ*: For as this Text shews clearly the Dominion and Sovereignty of Christ over those Places, and the Inhabitants of them; (for thence he sends Good Angels, by turns to be Ministring Spirits unto the Heirs of Salvation:) so also it shews that we have an Interest in those Regions, not only by the Ministry of Angels visiting us, and Conveying Blessings from those Places to us; but possibly moreover by our being Ordain'd to Co-habit with those Ministring Spirits hereafter, in the future Travels of our departed Souls; provided we die in the Lord, that is, Denizons of Christ's Kingdom, and under his Favour and Protection.

The same Phrase, *ἐν τοῖς ἑνεστέροις*, Occurs again in the 20th ver. of this Chap. He rais'd him from the Dead, and set him at his own Right hand, in the Heavenly Places; far above all Principality and Power, and Might and Domini-

on, and every Name that is Named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come: By World here it seems necessary to understand a State, and the meaning of the place may be this; God, since *Christ's* Resurrection from the Dead, hath exalted his Son *Jesus*, even in his *Humane* and *Mediatorial* Capacity, above all Ranks of Angels whatsoever, (for in his *Divine* and *Eternal* Capacity, He was above them before;) not only in their *Present* Degrees of Glory, but also in those *future* States that are reserv'd for them in a vast Variety of Orbs, wherein they shall be perfected, and reach far higher Degrees of Splendour and Accomplishments. In whatever *August* Mansions, they are already planted, or shall be hereafter planted; all the Angels, even those of the most Resplendent Orders, do now pay Homage to *Christ*, and observe his Commands. He is their Sovereign, not only as *God*, but as *Man* too.

5thly, There is another Noble Clause in this Epistle, which deserves our peculiar Animadversion: *Eph. ii. iv. God, who is Rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were Dead in Sins, hath quickned us together with Christ, and hath rais'd us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus: That in the Ages to come, he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his kindness towards us, thro' Christ Jesus.* The Greek Words *ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι ἐπερχομένοις*, here rendred in *Ages to come*, might have been rendred in *Worlds to come*. What are those *Worlds to come*? but the Receptacles of the Souls of Good Men, when they are separated from their Terrestrial Bodies; which Receptacles, without doubt,

were then already built and prepared for them. However, because they were not then already inhabited by those Souls of the Humane Class, to whom the Apostle directed his Discourse, they are call'd *Worlds to come*; the alterations of State, they have now long since experienc'd in them, were at that time future to them: Further, in those *Worlds to come*, were included the Receptacles of Men; when their separate Souls shall be reunited to their Bodies, Recompacked out of that Original Dust, into which the first Death had dissolv'd them. These latter Receptacles of Humane Souls, may possibly not be already built: If so, they be call'd *Worlds to come*, not only because the *States* to be experienc'd by Angels and Souls in them were future; but even because the very *Fabrics* of their *Final Mansions*, both were then, and still *are future to them* now. In both these *Worlds*, we shall sit together with *Christ* in Heavenly Places: In both these *Worlds*, but more in the *Latter* than in the *Former* of the two, we shall have a more Thankful and Delightful Sense of the Amazing Love of *Christ* to our Souls, than we can possibly have in our present State of Residence: Then we shall see more clearly and more transportingly, the Great and Gracious Effects of *Christ's* Redemption upon all the *Worlds* of Holy Angels, and of Holy Men.

6thly, The Words which our *English* Version Translates *from the beginning of the World*, in the Third Chap. and Ninth ver. of this Epistle, being in the Greek *ἀπὸ τῶν ἀιώνων* may be rendred *from Worlds*: That is, ever since any *World* was made: Ever since the first of

all

all the Worlds, that God hath Fram'd, was Created; provided the *Preposition* *and* be here to be taken in the *Sense of time*: For then the meaning is, that this Myſterious Tranſaction of Divine Providence, was reſolved upon by God, ever ſince He Created *Senſible* Worlds by *Jeſus Chriſt*; tho' not fully Reveal'd to Men or Angels, till the *Incarnation* of Chriſt: But *and* may be taken in the common uſe of it; and by this Myſtery's being hidden from Worlds, we are inform'd that the Inhabitants of no Worlds had ſuch knowledge of this Myſtery, before the Incarnation of Chriſt; neither the Souls of Holy Patriarchs deceas'd; nor the Angels of the earlieſt and moſt exalted Creations, did know ſo much of it then, as Good Men upon Earth did, after the Birth of Chriſt: *Then they*, as well as *we*, had a fuller *Communication* and Diſcovery of this Myſtery, and were partakers with us in the *Intellectual* and *Moral* Pleaſure, which was the reſult of the ſaid diſcovery: And indeed this latter Interpretation is very much favoured by the Words that follow, at the 10th ver. *To the intent that now unto the Principalities And Powers in Heavenly Places, might be known by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God.*

Thus alſo at the 11th ver. this Expression, *κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων* (tho' in our Verſion 'tis Tranſlated, according to the Eternal Purpoſe) might have been Engliſh'd, *according to the fore-diſpoſal of Worlds*, which he fore-ordain'd in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, that is, according to the *Series, Order* and regular Adminiſtration of all Worlds, by which God proceeds in the Government of his Creatures. He might re-

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veal this Mystery, first to the *Elder*, next to the *Later* Creations : First to Angels of the *Highest* Order, afterwards to *another*, and so, gradually to *Spirits* and *Souls* of the lowest Order , and under their meanest dispensation. And this Mystery might then be reveal'd to all in a manner at once, but in different Degrees of Light, according to the different Dignity of the Inhabitants of every World , and the Diversity of their more or less perfect dispensations of Religion : For as long as the Glory of the Blessed Angels or Men, continues increasing ; so long, their Knowledge of God, and Acquaintance with him is, I doubt not, increasing too ; and consequently with that Divine Knowledge of God, and his Works, and Providence, their Dispensation of Religion grows Brighter and Brighter with a *Spreading* Refulgency, till it shall arrive to *Perfect Day*. By this as well as other Ordinances of Providence, God appears infinitely Wise, and Just, and Good, and Wonderful in all the Characters of his Systems: For this *Multiformity* in the Worlds Created by him, and his Manifestations of his Sovereignty over them, is *Uniform* in Beauty : An *Equilibrious* Conformity of Holiness, Centres in the purposes of all his Resolves about them; and in due course of time, shines visibly to Created Minds, throughout the intire Circulation of all his various *Oeconomies* of them.

7thly, 'Tis a Remarkable Question to our purpose, which our Blessed Lord puts to *Nicodemus*, Joh. iii. xii. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of Heavenly things?* *τα εναντιον, as opposed*

posed here to *τὰ ἐπίγεια*, seems to denote *Scenes, and Transactions in the Worlds above*; not barely *Heavenly Subjects*; for *Regeneration*, the Subject then discoursed upon, was of that sort; as if he had said, if what I now say concerning a Change to be undergone here in this World, does so much startle and surprize you, how will you be able to bear the discovery of greater Changes undergone by Angels and Saints in Orbs, and States at a greater distance from you? There are more Amazing Revolutions experienc'd by Spirits and Souls, in Worlds *above and below*; than that of a Second Birth, taken either in a *Carnal* or a *Spiritual* Sense. To this give me leave to add, that the *μοναὶ πολλαὶ* spoken of, Chap. xiv. 2. *these many Mansions*, I say, must allude to a Multitude of *Habitable Orbs*.

Moreover, 8thly, *πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων* 1 Cor. 2. vii. may as well, or better be rendred *before the Worlds, as before Ages*. In the 8. Chap. ver. v. the Apostle observes, *There be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth; as there be Gods many and Lords many*: implying that, there are *Monarchs* among Angels, Good and Bad, as well as among Men; and possibly among departed Souls too in the *Celestial Orbs*, as well as among the *Imbodied Souls* of Men; for we read of *Rulers over Five, and Ten Cities*, Luke xix. xvii, xix. as also of others, that *sit upon Thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel*: Luke xxii. xxx. Some of those Monarchs may have whole Worlds Subordinate to their Government.

In like manner, 9thly, St. Paul in his 2d Epist. to the *Corinthians*, 5. 8. speaks of Death, under

der the Notion of the Souls Travelling out of the Body ; intimating, that when our Souls shall leave these Bodies, they will in their Passage to their allotted Harbours see many Worlds distinctly, which now they know only by Faith. I need not add here some other Proofs, which I have produced from Scripture before, where I have Stated the various Scripture-Senses of the Word *World*.

C H A P. III. S E C T. IV.

Some Thoughts concerning a Plurality of C R E A T I O N S.

THAT there were Good and Bad Angels in Being, before Man was Created, I think all do allow, and that these Angels had a State of Tryal of a long duration, antecedent to the State wherein both sorts of them are at present, shall be prov'd (God willing) from the Writings of St. Peter and St. Jude, when I come to Treat of *Angelical* and *Diabolical* Worlds. Hence we find, that when *MAN* was to be made, the Holy Trinity did enter into so Solemn a Consultation : *Gen. 1. 26. Let us make Man in our Image, after our likeness, and let them have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattle, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing, that creepeth upon the Earth : As if it had been said ; this Earth, as well as the Orbs of the elder Creation, shall be inhabited by Creatures capable of serving and glorifying their Maker,* with

a Spiritual and Rational service: They also shall have an *Air*, of Soveraingty; for many other Creatures shall be plac'd in Subjection to them: Man shall be King of this *New Paradise*, as Angels have been of *Old* ones.

The fal'n Angels by their Apostacy, had emptied the *Angelical* Creation of a considerable Number of Inhabitants. This was matter of Grief to the *Loyal* and *Holy* part of them: So many Thrones and Dignities made void, could not be fill'd up among themselves, by Creatures not allow'd to multiply their Kind: The Devils, who fell from them, heartily wish'd that they might never be enjoy'd by the Inhabitants of a New Creation; and nothing torment-ed Beings of so *Envious* a Temper as theirs more than the sight of our Creation, as soon as e're it began to emerge out of *Chaos* into *Form* and *Order*. Hence we read, *Joh. viii. 44.* that the Devil was a *Murderer from the beginning*; ἀνθρωποκτόνος, a *Slayer of Humane Creatures*, in his wishes and endeavours; ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *from the beginning*, even when our World began to be made.

But it rejoyc'd the Holy Angels, as much as it griev'd the Devils, to see our Creation begun; as appears from the Words of God himself to his afflicted Servant *Job*, Chap. 38. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Where wast thou, when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.*

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who hath stretched the Line upon it?

Whereupon are the Foundations thereof fastned? or who laid the Corner-Stone thereof?

When the Morning-Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.

As

As I never could read this Scripture without an extasie, so, whenever I read it, I cannot bring my self to believe, that God began to be a Creator so late, as five Thousand six Hundred and Sixty Years since, (supposing our common Computation of the beginning of our World be true,) or in short, whenever he began to form this System. 'Tis true, *Sensibla* and *Material* Creations, whenever, or how long soever since made, must imply God to have become a Creator of such Creations in time; and tho' Millions of Years multiplied by Millions be assign'd for the *Era* of Gods first Creation of *Visible Worlds*; yet still there is the same *Difficulty* (that is to say, no more than there is *Modesty*) in that famous Question, *why did God become a Creator so late?* for with God *Bilions* and *Trilions* of Years are as one Day; they are but a *Day* compar'd with his own *Eternity*: And therefore I do not see any necessity of laying down this Position, of Gods Creating Worlds long before ours, in order to vindicate his Honour, when assaulted by the Senseless Cavils of Impudent Infidels. No, the Great Mind, who (if he Created *Material* Creations at all) must necessarily Create them in time, began to Create them at the properest time; whether he began six Thousand, or six Thousand times six Thousand Years ago: Because any time, that he preferr'd for the beginning of such a Work, must be the properest. His meer preference of it declares and proves it so. In his own Ideas he has been a Creator, ever since he was a God; that is, from all *Eternity*, and without beginning: Those Worlds *within* are more Glorious, than the Worlds

Worlds without himself. Many Thousands of Worlds cannot add to his own *Intrinsic* excellency, any more than one ; nor did the *Elder* Contribute more than *Latterly* Creations to his Happiness : But nevertheless his *Extrinsic* and *Manifestative* Glory, (which is supported by the Ideas that finite Minds have of him) seems to be much more enlarg'd by a Plurality of Worlds and Creations, than by either a Single World, or a Single Creation ; and if it be true in Fact, that there is a Plurality of both, God hath Ordain'd a Plurality of both, for very Wise Reasons. His *Intrinsic* Glory suffers nothing by the Enlargement of his *Extrinsic* Glory ; tho' the former stands not in need of the latter to support it : And his *extrinsic* Glory had been greater than we can express, without any other Creation than that which *Moses* describes. But tho' (if God had thought fit) any one Creation, and consequently that alone which *Moses* describes, had been sufficient to manifest his Glory to us ; yet it does not follow, that he hath not manifested his Glory farther by other Creations ; and it may still be true that he hath done so, without detracting from the *Mosaic* Creation. *Moses* Writes nothing about the Creation of Angels ; yet notwithstanding his silence upon that Subject, we believe that they had a beginning, and were all Created together by the same God, who made the Heavens and the Earth, mention'd in the first Chap. of *Gen.* For the *Psalmists* tells us, *Pf. civ. 4. He maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a Flaming Fire.*

If therefore other Scriptures, and several Tenets contain'd in them, do plainly imply
that

that Angels were in Being, before our World was made, and had gone thro' some varieties of State, and Experience before *then*; why should we be backward to believe it, only because *Moses* gives us no solemn account of the time, and other Circumstances of Gods Creation of Angels and *Angelical* Orbs; as also of the Remarkable Occurrences that pass'd in their World, before the Creation of ours? He might indeed, if he had thought fit, have made all the Angels and all the Orbs which they inhabit, at once, in an instant: For *Word* and *Will* is *Work* to God, and the most Stupendous Productions appear at his Command, as soon as the least effects of his Power. But can we believe that God, who allotted the Solemnity of Six Days for the Creating our Heavens and the Earth, and the first Samples of their Inhabitants, Created Angels with no Solemnity? might we not more reasonably think that different Ranks and Orders of them, were Created in different Successions of time, tho' all Angels of the same Order were created together? Besides, granting them to be all Created in an instant; How shall we find time for that State of Trial, which the Contents of the New Testament do all along suppose to be expir'd, not only to particular Angels, but to several whole Classes of them, before Man was Created, without supposing a Plurality of Creations? Was their *Paradisical* State, the State of a Moment? or can we think that like the untimely Fruit of a Woman, it never saw any Sun? No Interpreter of, or Commentator upon the History of *Moses*, ever shew'd so Superstitious a Reverence for the *Letter* of his

his Writings, as to Scruple to take it for granted, that *the Serpent*, which Chap. iii. 1. is said to be *more Subtil than any Beast of the Field*, was a fal'n Angel, who had assumed the form of that Beast. Now this fal'n Angel was in one State at that time; and had been in another State before then: Must no considerable Tract of time be allow'd for all this change of State and Circumstances among the Angels? Does not this very part of the History embolden us to conceive Angels Created before Men? Can we think that an Angel turn'd Seducer, as soon as ever he was made? God made *Angels*, but he made no *Devils*; tho' some of them made themselves such. But to return from *Moses* to *Job*; by the *Morning Stars* in the place appeal'd to not long since, *St. Basil*, *St. Crysostom*, *Gregory*, *Naxianzen*, *Philoponus*, *Olympiodorus*, *St. Hilary*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Ambrose*, *John Damascene*, *Isidore*, *Beda*, and *Cassian* do understand the Holy Angels: And they declare it as their Sentiment, that this Text does suppose them Created a long time before the Creation, which *Moses* describes. And truly, they had a great deal of Reason to think so: For what else was the Occasion of all that Joy, which they are said there to express at the Creation of this World? It could not be sure to see themselves just come into Being with this System, and about 3, 4, or 5 days old. The very Description of their Joy, argues them possess'd of Existence and Life of a long standing. Why then did they rejoice so much to see our World built? Had not they seen Nobler Orbs of Gods framing of old? yes, but in this Orb new-form'd Creatures were to be

be planted for a while, in order to be train'd up for their Heavenly Orbs, and in future times to fill up the Vacancies, and repair the Desolations; that for some time had been made in those Worlds of Glory. God seems by an *Absolute Predestination of Grace*, to have provided that a certain Colony of Human Creatures shall be so *unerringly* educated, under the Discipline of the Holy-Ghost, as at length to be fitted for the deserted Stations of fal'n Angels; and to fill up the Original Number of the Inhabitants of every Angelical World. Nevertheless, others besides these, by a *Conditional Predestination of Grace*, may prepare themselves for lower Seats in the Angelical Worlds; or for higher Seats in the Inferiour Worlds of Glory. 'Twas for this Prospect, that the Heavens of the Holy Angels resounded with such Triumphant Shouts of Joy; when the Heavens and the Earth of our System first made their appearance, and put on their Virgin-Röbes of Light. But my Enlargement upon these Subjects, must be reserv'd for another Place. Wherefore I proceed to some other Passages of Scripture, whence we may discern a Plurality of Creations.

Now, the single Epistle of St. Paul to the *Romans*, supplies us with several intimations to our purpose. For *First*, the 20th ver. of the first Chap. favours this Assertion very much, as will appear by dissecting the Original Text: In our Version it stands thus. *The Invisible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made; the Greek is as follows;*

τὰ ὁράματα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασι
 19-

νοούμενα καθεστῆται: τὰ δὲ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ, for his Perfections, [Power and God-head] which can't be discerned by the Eye of the Body, καὶ κτιστοὺς κόσμους, ever since the Creation of the Universe, νοούμενα, being purely and carefully contemplated by the Mind, καθεστῆται, are intellectually seen, τοῖς νοήμασι, by the several Systems that he hath made. As the sight of a well-compos'd Poem, Written or Printed, in a fair Character, shews the Wit and Judgment of some Poet, who conceived it in his Mind; and the Writing or Impression of it, is an Argument that there is some Artist, who can Write and Print: So every System of Orbs in the Universe, by the adjusted Bulk, the well-proportion'd Number, the Decent Position, and Concentrick Motions of them shews such a Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, as can reside in nothing inferiour to Deity. A contemplative Person may easily Trace legible Characters of Omnipotence, and other Perfections of an Infinite Extent, in every distinct Construction of Orbs, throughout the Circuit of the whole World.

The next Passage in this Book, that makes for a Plurality of Creations, is found at the twenty Second Verse of the Eighth Chapter. *We know, that the whole Creation groaneth, and travaileth together in Pain until now.* Here *πάντα ἡ κτίσις*, may be rendred, every Creation; and that it had better have been so English'd, will, I humbly conceive, appear, by considering the Context, as far back as from the Eighteenth Verse. *For I reckon that the Sufferings of this present time; are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us; εἰς δόξαν, amongst us.*

19th, *For the earnest expectation of the Creature,*
τὴν ἀποδοὺς [of this Creation,] waiteth for the
Manifestation of the Sons of God.

20th, *For the Creature,* [this Creation] *was*
made subject to Vanity, not willingly, [not of its
 own accord:] *but by reason of him, who hath sub-*
jected the same in hope.

21st, *Because the Creature it self also,* *καὶ αὐτὴ*
ἡ κτίσις, [even this self same Creation, with-
 out excepting the very inanimate part of it,]
shall be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption,
into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God.

22d, *For we know, that the whole Creation* [eve-
 ry Creation as well as this,] *groaneth and tra-*
vaileth together in Pain until now; that is, every
 System, as well as ours, has Orbs of Disho-
 nour in it at present, for the Confinement of
 obstinate Transgressours, in their several Crea-
 tions; and those Dutiful Creatures amongst
 them, which inhabit the Orbs of Honour in
 them, are not yet in so perfect a state, as is de-
 sign'd for them, when the very Orbs them-
 selves shall be beautified with New Splendor
 and Imbelishments; and therefore, by a Fi-
 gure, they may be said to long to discharge
 themselves of some of their Inhabitants, that
 are to be punish'd for a while in Hell: Nay,
 and to part with the best of their Inhabitants
 for a while, in order to receive them again in-
 to themselves, in a more flourishing Condition,
 after they shall have been Purified, and New-
 Cast, by the last Conflagration. Accordingly,
 the best of their Inhabitants do long for that
 Change, which will render them intirely per-
 fect: They are in Ease and Bliss, but they
 wish for more Glory; because those *Prisoners of*
Hope,

Hope, (as one of the Prophets elegantly calls them,) know that God hath ordained them for it. There is a Passage in the second Book of Esdras, Chap. iv. v. 42. which may help to illustrate the Scripture under our present View. In the Grave, [the World or State of the Dead] the Chambers of Souls are like the Womb of a Woman: For like as a Woman that travaileth, maketh haste to escape the necessity of the Travail: Even so do these Places haste to deliver those things, that are committed unto them. It may not be amiss to look back upon the 35th, to the 38th Verse. Did not the Souls of the Righteous ask Questions of these things in their Chambers, saying, How long shall I hope on this Fashion? When cometh the Fruit of the Floor of our Reward? And unto these things Uriel the Archangel gave them Answer, and said; Even when the number of Seeds is filled in you: For he hath weighed the World in a Ballance: By Measure hath he measured the Times, and by Number hath he numbered the Times, and he doth not move nor stir them, until the said Measure be fulfilled.

Moreover, The Thirty ninth Verse of this Chapter seems to make use of the Word *κτίσις*, in the sense of a *Création*; I am persuaded (saith our Apostle there) that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, *ἢ τῆς κτίσεως ἑτέρας*, [nor any other Creation] (for the Terms Height and Depth are not so intelligible of Persons, as of States and Places) shall separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our

Lord: Which in effect is to say, I am fully satisfied, that in every part of our future Life and State, and in whatever Regions and Systems of the Universe our Souls shall be cast, we shall be sensible in all of them, of the Love of God thro' Christ, and still for ever remain under the delightful Care and Government of Jesus, the Potent Mediator between God and Man.

Agreeably hereunto, our Blessed Saviour is called, *Col. i. 15. The First-born of every Creature*, *πρωτότοκος πάντων κτίσεων*, the *First-born of every Creation*. Christ therefore in a Divine Capacity, was not only before *Abraham*; or before the Formation of our Earth: But before every Creation whatsoever; whether there were *one* or *more*, before our System was made.

The Word *κτίσις*, is capable of the same Version, *Heb. iv. 13. Neither is there any Creature, that is not manifest in his sight*. I should rather render it, *There is not a Creation obscure before him*: by a Creation, understanding a Construction of Orbs, created at the same time, and stocked with Collections of Creatures, adapted to the state of the several Orbs, and the Purposes for which they were ordained, in the Multifarious Counsels of God.

But this Opinion, of a Plurality of Creations, is built upon another Argument, taken from the Phrase, *χρόνοι αἰώνιοι*, *eternal Times*: It occurs more than once, *2 Tim. i. 9. πρὸς χάριν αἰώνιον*, *who hath saved us, and call'd us with an Holy Calling*; not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the World began, *πρὸς χρόνον αἰώνιον*, *before eternal Times*. So also,

Titus

Titus i. 2. In hope of eternal Life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the World began, *πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων*, before eternal Times. Once more, Rom. xvi. 25. Now to him, that is of Power to establish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the Revelation of the Mystery, which was kept secret since the World began. My explaining the Phrase in this place, will serve for an explication of it in all the other Citations. Now the Greek for these English Words, Which was kept Secret since the World began, is, *χρόναις αἰώνιαις ἀκρυβήταις*, that is, concealed throughout eternal Times. This Assertion must relate to Beings created before Men: the lowest sense of the Word, *αἰώνιος*, must denote Times, the Beginning whereof cannot be assigned by either the Person, Writing, or those to whom he wrote. But the Times since the Mosaic Creation, were computable by both. The Word, *αἰώνιος*, when applied to past Duration, need not signify *absolutely* interminable, in the sense of being without beginning, unless when it is applied to God; but interminable to our Understanding, as being unable to find out, when such a Thing, Season, World, or Dispensation, to which it is applied, did begin: And this in the Places just cited, must be the meaning of *χρόναις αἰώνιαις*, *Eternal Times or Seasons*.

In our Language it sounds as an inconsistent Contradiction, but not in the Greek; for there, it readily appears to express all times, that have bin throughout the whole past Duration; of all the *Eons*, that is, of all the *Systems*, which God hath made, and erected out of nothing, at different times; and of all the Dispensations,

and various Politics and Administrations, whereby God hath governed the Inhabitants of them all : For they were all fore-ordain'd in a beautiful Series and Variety, and superintended and overruled by him. For the *Adjective* αἰώνιος, may sometimes, when joined to certain *Substantives*, partake of the extensive meaning of the Word, αἰών, from which it is derived, which sometimes signifies a *World*, sometimes an *Age*, and sometimes a *Dispensation*; and perhaps, such a Word is applied by the Spirit of God in those promiscuous Senses, because those Worlds were all built by one and the same God, and all the Dispensations thereof are also administred by him in different Seasons, and both began to be in different *Portions*, and are to remain in different *Proportions* of Duration.

In likemanner, αἰώνιος, when applied to future Duration, may be granted to signifie, *continuing throughout all the Eons*, or Dispensations of the Invincible Worlds, that are to be entred by the Persons, of whom the Writer is speaking. Now whether they may have an end in God's Foresight, we may not know from this Word, tho' they have no end in our Foreknowledge. But if the Doctrine of the Eternity of Hell-Torments, did depend upon the meaning of the Word αἰώνιος, as without doubt it doth not, no Man could rationally presume to live in a Course of Presumptuous sinning; for the future Revolution of Souls in Invisible Worlds, may as certainly be foreseen to have no end in God's Omniscience, as 'tis out of the Power of our Understanding to assign Bounds to them : For as their being Interminable

minable to us, does not argue them Interminable to God : So their being Interminable to us, does not prove that they are not Interminable to God. And yet the Sinner upon that foot, would have but an horrendous View of Extinction of Conscious Being at last, after his tormentful Punishments had been protracted to a Revolution of Ages ; that it would turn his Head, and rend his Heart asunder, to think of them beforehand, or to Compute them, if they could be Computed.

However, Other Scriptures, which call the Final Torment of the Wicked, *a Fire that will never be quench'd*, and *a Worm that never dies* ; do sufficiently prove both the future Duration of the Wicked, and their Torments in it, to be Eternal in the Sense of an absolute Extent of Futurity. And consequently that the Term, *ἀίδιον*, when applied to their Punishment in a Future State, must signifie absolutely Eternal : That it doth sometimes signify so, is apparent from St. Paul's use of the Word, 2 Cor. v. 1. for there *ἀίδιον* *οἶκος*, an *Eternal Tabernacle* or *Dwelling*, is opposed to an House or Habitable, *that can be dissolved*.

But notwithstanding all the foremention'd Proofs alledged out of the Scripture, I am still aware of its being objected, that this Opinion of a Plurality of Creations, seems to run counter to the Account, which *Moses* gives of the Creation of the Heaven and the Earth in the Space of six Days : For tho' the Creation of Angels is not expressly mentioned there ; yet the Creation of the Stars is mentioned in the Work of the fourth Day ; for we read, Gen. i. 16. that God then made the *Stars* also,

Nay farther, it is added at the first Verse of the second Chapter, *Thus the Heavens, and the Earth were finished, and all the Host of them*: Whence most Persons conclude, that the Creation whereof *Moses* gives an account, was, a *Con-creation* of all things at once; and consequently, that both the Angels and the Orbs inhabited by them, were created at the same time with our Heaven and Earth.

Now, Not to repeat what hath been said by Mr. *Whiston* and Mr. *Witty*, upon this Subject: I shall content my self with these following Observations.

First, The Talmudists observe, that there are seven Names of Heaven, yet the Word *Schaim* occurs oftneft in Scripture; which is a Word of the Dual Number, and seems, in their Judgment, to intimate a distinction of the Heavens, into those made long before our Earth, and others made with it. There are Heavens within the Veil, beyond our Sight, in the very Surfaces of their Orbs, which were typified by the *Holy of Holies* in the Jewish Temple; and there are others, on this side the Veil, within our View; and thus, *God stretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain*, Isa. xl. 22.

Secondly, The *Mosaic* Creation may take in, not only those Orbs which are called the Planets, but all the Stars in our Sight; and yet there may have been Structures beyond them, inhabited by Angels of every Order, a long while before any Angels of any Order left their allotted Stations, and apostatiz'd from God. God's *Visible* Works ought no more to be con-
/ fin'd

fin'd within the narrow Horizon of our Sight,
than his *Invisible* ones.

Thirdly, By all the *Hosts of the Heavens*, re-
ferr'd to in the History of *Moses*, may be
meant all the fallen Angels; which were then
thrust down into those lower Regions of the
Air; and all those Colonies of Good Angels,
which Minister to some Souls out of Bodies,
and to others in Bodies here below, by turns,
passing from Orb to Orb, backward and for-
ward, at different times, in fore-allotted Cour-
ses; tho' all those Beings were created before
this System: and therefore, this Text need
not imply, that they were just created at that
time. Our Creation being, at that time, the
last of God's Creations, all of them might be
said to be finish'd with ours, tho' some of
them were finish'd long before in their
Structures. However, they were not perfected
commensurately, with the Series of God's ex-
tensive Decrees, before our System was built;
and there were made some Samples, at least,
of all the Species of Creatures that should live
in the several Regions of it; because in the
eternal Counsels and Designs of the Almighty
Architect of the Universe, all those more
Magnificent Fabricks had some relation to ours,
before it was built, and ours to their System,
after it was built. The Inhabitants of those
higher Orbs, have Transactions with the Inha-
bitants of these lower ones; neither will they
be perfected, or have gone thro' all their Dis-
pensations of State and Religions, till the In-
habitants of ours have done so too.

And

And as upon the forefaid Account, this Expression, *all the Hosts of them*, may take in Angels of both sorts, without affirming them to be then brought fresh into Being : So it may, by *Anticipation*, take in the separate Souls of Men, planted in some of these as their Receptacles, without supposing them in a State of Pre-existence, and tho' they were created, long after these Orbs were made : For *Moses* penn'd this History, when there were several Souls of Men planted there, over and above the Number of Souls included in the whole *Antediluvian* Race of Men ; for *Death* reigned from Adam to *Moses*.

To vindicate this Explanation of the forecited Scripture, it may not be amiss to produce a Passage in this very History, wherein the Letter of the Text must be interpreted with some *Restriction implied*, tho' not *express'd*. At the second and third Verses of the second Chapter of *Genesis*, we find these Words. *And on the seventh Day, God ended his Work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh Day, from all his Work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh Day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his Work, which God created and made.* By *all his Work* here, must be understood, only that Work which the Sacred Historian had been giving an account of in the first Chapter ; as appears by the fourth Verse : For altho' the Words of that Scripture, at first reading, seem to contain an universal Proposition ; yet our Blessed Lord plainly assures us, that they must not be so understood, but with a qualifying Limitation, in that remarkable Saying of his to the Jews, *St. John*

v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Besides, who-ever doubted, notwithstanding that Scripture in *Genesis*, that God daily creates vast Numbers of new Souls of several Sorts; or that he will hereafter create new Heavens, and a new Earth, wherein Righteousness will dwell as securely, as Iniquity abounds in our Earth at present? for so we read, 2 *Pet.* ii. 13. *Nevertheless we, according to his Promise, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.*

And as the *Three first Chapters* in the Book of *Genesis*, must not be understood to assert, that God then ceased to be a Creator: So they need not be understood to assert, that he then *began* to be a Creator. The Letter of *Historical*, as well as other Scriptures, must be understood, and interpreted with due Restrictions, and in such a way as to illustrate God's Glory, and to reconcile one part of Divine Writ most clearly with another: And if there be any seeming Opposition, *Moses* ought to give way to *Christ*, and the *Letter* to the *Spirit*, in our Comments upon the Old and New Testament: And they who observe this Rule, with Religious-Caution and Reverence, tho' they may offer New Illustrations of Old Texts and Old Truths, cannot fairly be censured as Persons, who wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, or to the Subversion of the Faith once delivered to the Saints. And such Censures are still more unreasonable, provided *Orthodoxy* sits more firm, upon the said *really* or *seemingly* New Illustrations of some particular Scriptures, than it does, upon more modish and received Interpretations of them.

C H A P. IV. S E C T. I.

The Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds, proved serviceable to the Improvement of Practical Divinity.

ALL Subjects and Speculations in *Theology*, considered purely as a *Science*, ought to be very much valued, and deserve to be set in a true Light, for the Benefit of different Classes of Devout Persons, according to their different Genius, Wants, and Capacities. Holy *David's* Temper, without the Penetration of a *Solomon*, makes every Thing, that a well-dispos'd Person sees or hears, a Divine Subject to him; and finds Moral and Theological Instruction, in all the Works and Productions of Nature, in all the Occurrences of Life, and in all the Transactions of Business and Converse: Nevertheless, as among Divine Subjects, some are more Sublime and Seraphical: So they are more Practical, and Fruitful in Edifying Inferences, than others. Of this kind is the Subject that now employs our Meditation. This will appear, if we consider how,

First, It promotes in us an habitual Frame and Spirit of *Devotion*.

Secondly, 'Tis a great Preservative against committing Sin, and disposes us to the Practice of the most solemn *Repentance*, for Sins committed.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It hath an excellent Tendency, both to prevent and suppress the prevalence of *Pride* and *Vanity*.

Fourthly, It shews the Beauty of *Beneficence*, and is a quickning Spur to the Practice of it.

Fifthly, It establisheth, and enlivens our *Faith* and *Hope*, by strengthening our Belief of both the Immortality of our Souls, and of the Resurrection of our Bodies ; and supplies us with strong Consolations against the Fear of Death.

Sixthly, 'Tis an inexhaustible fund of *Heavenly-mindedness*, and gives Life and Lustre to our Meditations upon Divine Subjects.

Seventhly, It manifests the super-eminent excellency of the Person of Christ, and excites in us the most generous Principles of *Gratitude* towards him.

Eighthly, It supports us with Patience under Trouble, and gives us a solid and unaffected Contempt of the World.

C H A P. IV.

S E C T. II.

The Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds, improv'd to the furtherance of Devotion.

PURE and undefiled Devotion towards God, is what every Christian ought to aspire after : for it gives a Divine Tincture and Complexion to our Souls ; it hallows our Passions ; it cheers the Heart with a foretast of some of the Clusters of the heavenly *Canaan*, even here upon Earth ; and gives us an habitual Tranquillity of Mind. In short, it gives us a sort
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of Propriety in God, and argues us Partakers of a Divine Nature.

To be Devout, is a far higher Attainment, than to repeat Prayers, or to sing Hymns and Psalms, with some transient attention to what we are repeating or chaunting. It consists of an awful Sense of God's Omnipotence at all times, and in a more recollected Attentiveness of Mind, to the sanctifying Influences of God's Spirit, and of more fervent Desires of them, whilst we are performing the outward Duties of Piety. The Grace of Devotion well founded in the Heart, implies in it such a sway and tendency towards God, as prefers him before all other Objects of Desire, and Subjects of Thought: It makes us think mostly upon him, and with most Pleasure upon him too: It turns our Eye so intently towards God in our Conduct, as to make him run more or less in all our Thoughts, and incites us to do every Thing to his Glory.

To speak in St. Peter's Phrase, *It sanctifies the Lord God in our Hearts*; that is, it gives God a separate and distinguish'd Apartment, in all the Powers of our thinking Substance. Our *Understanding*, when enlightened by Devotion, employs it self with most Reverence and Care, and with the greatest Frequency and Delight, upon the Perfections of God's exalted Majesty, upon the Effects and Atchievements of his Power, upon the Proofs and Transactions of his Providence, and upon the Revelations and Discoveries of his Holy Will and Laws. In like manner, the *Affections* of a Devout Soul, do exert themselves with the most sprightly Emotions towards God:

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Nothing is fear'd, so much as his Wrath and Justice by the Devout ; nothing admired with so profound an esteem, as his Manifestations of his Presence, Attributes, and Glory ; nothing desired so much, as assuring Tokens of his Favour ; nothing belov'd with such Ardour and Extasy, as his Glorious and All-excellent Being. Devotion also renders those who are animated with its Divine Temper, solicitous to know God's Commands, and to observe them according to the best of that Light and Strength, which God is pleased to impart ; Moreover, it makes them importunate in Prayer, for an increase of Spiritual Knowledge and Power, that they may be Wise, Active, and Indefatigable in the Service of God, and a Conscientious Performance of Religious Duties. It gives the *Apprehension* a ready and quick Sense of the Mercies, which God bestows upon us ; the *Judgment*, a curious and distinguishing Taste, in weighing and discerning the different Value of them ; the *Memory*, a faithful and retentive Recollection of them ; and the *resolving* and *executive Powers* of the Soul, a Vein of carefulness to improve them : So that it transforms and new-moulds the whole *inner Man*, and actuates the main part of the Behaviour of the *outer* one : Now in this, the Essence and Spirit of Religious Thankfulness for Mercies, doth consist. Devotion, moreover, disposes us for Repentance for our Sins, and perfects it too ; as well as our Gratitude for the Blessings which we receive from Heaven : For it makes our Sorrow and Contrition sincerely *Godly*, and productive of a Repentance not to be repented of : For no abhorrence of Sin is so *Evangelical*, as that which

which proceeds from a due sight of the Deformity of Sin : But nothing shews that so distinctly, as an enlightned Knowledge and Love of God, and of the Excellency of his Laws : For by this, the Malignity of every thing contrary thereunto, is soonest discover'd, and in the most affecting manner. By this Spirit of Devotion, *Enoch* walked with God; *Abraham* was his Friend; *Jacob* saw him; *Moses* talk'd with him; *David* was a Man after his own Heart, and set the Lord always before him; and *Jeh* never considered him, without being afraid; that is, had awful Impressions upon his Mind, arising from a Sense of his Greatness and Majesty, and durst not presume to offend him.

Now, nothing promotes this Spirit of Devotion so readily, as a view of these Worlds without Number, whereof I have been speaking; for they are all of the Workmanship of one and the same Great God. Lift up therefore your Eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their Host by number; he calleth them all by Names, by the greatness of his Might; for that he is strong in Power, not one faileth: It is he that sitteth on the Circle of the Earth, that stretcheth out the Heavens as a Curtain, and spreadeth them out, as a Tent to dwell in. In this view, we have a lofty Scale of Life and Being before us; the Foot of it, indeed, is set upon the Earth, but the Rounds of this Ladder are Innumerable; it passeth through Myriads of spacious Orbs, and the Top of it reacheth to the Highest Heaven, Angels of God ascending and descending all along upon it, and the Lord standing above it. Since therefore

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we have *Jacob's Vision*, more perfectly than a Dream; why should we not have *Jacob's Devotion*? We have in our present Theory, been with the Prophet *Isaiah*, seeing the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up; and his Train appears to have fill'd his Temple. Wherefore as the *Seraphim* above, let *Men* also below, cover their Faces with Reverence, and their Feet with Circumspection: And as those Sons of God shouted for Joy, at the Creation of our World, so let us Triumph and Rejoyce in the Discovery of the vast extensiveness of theirs: By the Wings of Devotion let us soar into their finer Element, and join Company and Consort with the Choirs above; and let us cry one to another and say, *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts*; for not only the whole *Earth*, but the whole *Universe*, is full of his Glory; and all the *Orbs* and *Systems*, whereof it consists. We have, like *Esdra*s, seen a great People, whom we cannot number, and they all praise the Lord with Songs and Anthems: Let us also laud the Name of the Lord, and with inspired Writers let us say, The Lord reigneth, The Lord reigneth indeed; let the Multitude of his Worlds rejoyce: His Kingdom is infinite, and his Dominion not only without End; but also without Bounds too: The Lord hath so done his marvellous Works, that they ought to be had in remembrance. One World doth praise his Works to another, and declare his mighty Acts. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shews his Handy-work. All the Orbs which he hath made, do praise him; and the Saints who inhabit them, Bless and Extol him:

him: They speak of the Glory of his Kingdom, and talk of his Power; To make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the Glorious Majesty of his Kingdom: Men therefore should speak of the Might of his terrible Acts; and declare and celebrate his Greatness. Praise ye the Lord, for his Praise is above Heaven, and Earth. Praise him in the Heights, where Heavens upon Heavens, and Hosts above Hosts, praise him; Yea, they all praise the Name of the Lord; for he Commanded, and they were Created: He hath also establish'd them for ever, and pass'd Decrees about them, which shall not be chang'd: He order'd the Number of both the Visible and Invisible Stars, and calls them all by their Names. It is good to sing Praises unto our God, for his Name only is excellent: His Glory fills the Heavens, and overspreads the Earth; and he enlivens all the Hosts that People them: By him the end of them hath prosperous Success; and by his Word, all things consist. We may speak much, and come short, tho' we had the Tongues of Angels; for in sum he is all. How shall we be able to magnifie him? for he is great above all his Works: The Lord is great and very terrible, and marvellous is his Power. Wherefore, whenever you glorify the Lord with Psalmody, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: And when you exalt him, put out all your Strength, and be not weary; for you can never go far enough. Who hath seen him, that he may tell us? and who can magnifie him as he is? There are yet hid greater things than these be; for we have
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seen but a few of his Works; for the Lord hath made all things.

O, How Glorious is the Spirit of the Lord, who thus filleth all Things, and upholdeth them in Being! How passionately ought we to Love, and Admire him! Does *Beauty* strike our Passions? He is more beautiful than the Sun, and above all the Order of Stars; being compared with the Light, he is found before it. Do we admire *Power*, *Policy*, and *Activity*? Behold then this Worker of all things, and admire that Universe, which is an unspotted Mirrour of God, and a Transcript of his bright Ideas; the Energy and Harmony whereof appear in all the Structures that he hath built, and in all the Creatures that he hath so curiously design'd, and wrought in the several *Stamina* of their Essences: By virtue of the fineness of his own Essence, he is more Moving and Agile than any Motion; and passeth and goeth through all things, without being circumscrib'd within any Space or Place, and without being hamper'd or retarded by any thing. In him Orbs and Angels subsist and move; for he being but One, can do all things; and remaining the same invariably in himself, maketh all things new. Do we admire *Wisdom*? Behold! all Wisdom is the breath of the Power of God, and a pure Emanation from the Glory of the Almighty. All Wisdom is from above, from him the Father of *Intellectual*, as well as *Visible Lights*. Skill and Genius, and all the Beneficent Endowments of the Mind are his Gifts; they are all Streams from the Fountain of that Infinite Wisdom, that reacheth from one end of the Universe to another, with a benign

and piercing Efficacy in its Administrations, ordering all things with the most regular Equability. 'Tis he that gives to different Creatures in different Degrees, as he thinks fit, certain Knowledge of the Things that are; namely, to know how the World was made, and the operation of the Elements; the beginning and ending, and midst of the Times; the Alterations of the turning of the Sun, and the change of Seasons; the Circuits of Years, and the Positions of Stars; the Natures of Living Creatures, and the Furies of wild Beasts; the violence of Winds, and the reasonings of Men; the diversities of Plants, and the vertues of Roots. Do we love *Riches*? Behold! not only the Earth, but all the Heavens are the Lords, and the Fullness thereof. If Riches be a Possession to be desir'd, what is richer than God that maketh all Things, and possesseth all Things, in that he preserves them? Upon whom doth not his Light arise? He furnisheth out Plenty, both in his High, and in his low Places; for whither doth not the Care and Provinces of his Providence extend? The whole Universe is one vast Mannor and Lordship, and all that dwell in it hold their Tenures of him, and *under* him: To him Angels are Farmers, and Emperors Tenants: In his Favour is Life, and the Light of his Countenance is a Treasure unto Creatures, which, like the Widows Cruse, never fails. Besides, He teacheth Temperance and Prudence, Justice and Fortitude; than which Virtues, and the Labours of them, nothing is more profitable in their Life. Do we love *Honour*? then we must love the Maker of the Universe; for he is King of all

all the Worlds that he has made : Scepters and Thrones are of his Disposal : Ten thousand times ten thousand, and Thousands of Thousands of Glorious Spirits minister before him : The Sense and Dread of his Transcendent Excellence, lays Cherubim flat, and Seraphim prostrate before him. Might in his Presence are but Atoms, and Dominions as a Drop to the Ocean. Principalities and Powers, and all the radiant Hosts of Angels, pay their Tribute of Homage and Adoration to him, in the Battlements of Heaven ; For they all receive their Commission and Authority from him : And the Apostate Spirits tremble and sink as low, under the Terrors of his Frowns ; as the Good Angels, from a Sense of Pleasure and Duty. The Honour of Human Nature is founded upon its being created in the Image of God. Reason and an Understanding Principle magnifieth its Nobility, because she is conversant with God, and is privy to some Knowledge of his Mysteries, and a Contemplator of his Works. Lastly, Do we love *Goodness* ? then we must Love and Admire God ; for there is none Good, as God is so : *God is LOVE* : He is Benevolence, and Beneficence it self. Wherefore, Love the Lord all ye that are Saints, or desire, or profess to be such ; for because he is Good, he created all things, that they might have their Being. The Generations of this, and every other World were healthful at first ; Neither had there been any Poison of Destruction in them ; Nor had the Kingdom been any where in Heaven or in Earth : But Ungodly Men, and An-

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gels of a Spirit too imperious, with their Works call'd it to them.

CHAP. IV. SECT. III.

*The Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds, prov'd
promotive of REPENTANCE.*

AS our Contemplation of the many *Worlds* which God has made, displays abroad the vast Theatres and Mines of Perfection, which had always very ample, tho' conceal'd Repositories in the Centre of his Eternal Deity, and bespeaks the highest Admiration, and most rapturous Affections from all his Creatures, that they can possibly conceive: So it shews the greatness of his Justice and Vengeance, against the Ungrateful Offenders of so Divine a Being; so Holy and exalted a Majesty. Our Spirits can't but be compos'd to an awful Frame, whenever we consider that he is the Author of so many stately Structures. Sinners upon this View, must commune with their own Hearts: This must make them Still and Reverent before him: This must put them upon lamenting their Folly, and forsaking those Sins which annoy the Purity of his Eye, and provoke him to shower down Wrath and Vengeance upon those very Persons whom he desir'd to save, and to have made sharers of Bliss and Glory in his Heavenly and Everlasting Kingdom. He that made all these Worlds to be enjoy'd by their Respective Inhabitants
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with Delight, if they behave themselves as becomes thankful Dependents, makes some of them Prisons for confining incorrigible Offenders, in a state of Punishment and Misery: There God humbles the Children of Pride, and chains up the Lions and Tigers of his Creation. Wherefore, let all Criminals and Malefactors not yet depriv'd of their State of Probation, Consider seriously the Power of the Lord of Worlds in time, and how great and dreadful the Terrors of such a Lord exasperated must needs be.

His Threatnings can't be Despicable, tho' his Forbearance may have been of a long standing: God is Light, a Sun and a Shield to the Good; Nay, and he shines, and rains down Blessings upon the Wicked, till they prove finally Impenitent, and are turn'd out of this, into a dolesome Orb, into outer Darknes; for then he is a consuming Fire to them. Who can stand before his Indignation? O senseless Sinner! Hast thou an Arm stronger than God? Wilt thou set thy self against Omnipotence, and dash thy self in Pieces against the thick Bosses of his Buckler? Surely, as a Man feareth, and far more terrible than our Fears can forebode, is his *final* Displeasure; *for when he rebuketh Man, [in the way of loving Discipline] for Sin, he makes his Beauty [every thing Excellent and Valuable in him] to consume away, even as a Moth fretteth a Garment: Who therefore can abide it, when he entreteth into irreversible Judgment with Men, and shall be extreme to mark what they have done amiss?* Remember this, all Impenitent and Unrelenting Sinners; Remember, he is God High and Strong: Shew yourselves

Men too rational to enter the Lists with his Anger: Consider your Frailty, and cease to enrage him. He that made so many Heavens, can easily dissolve them by Fire or Water, or the Violence of any softer Element, let loose into Storm and Tempest against them. For to pull down, is easier to Man, than to build; and therefore, the easier Task of the two cannot be hard to God. How should the best, the least offending among Men, be just with God? If a *Noah*, a *Daniel*, or a *Job*, contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a Thousand: If therefore the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and Presumptuous Herd of Sinners appear? God by all the Creations he hath made, hath shewn himself by numberless Testimonies, both Wise in Heart, and Mighty in Strength; who therefore ever hardned himself against him, and hath prospered? Cannot he who fastned the Mountains, overturn them in his Anger? Cannot he who founded the Earth, cause its Pillars to tremble, and remove it out of its place? If God will not withdraw his Anger, the Proudest, the most daring Opposers must stoop under it. He that refresheth the Subjects of his Mercy with the Light and chearing Warmth of the Sun, can easily withdraw it from shining upon the Wicked, and Seal up all the Stars from their Sight.

Because Sentence is not speedily executed against Evil Doers, therefore some Mens Hearts are fear'd in a fool-hardy Fondness for their Wicked Courses, and lull'd into a Spiritual Lethargy. They Sin securely, and practice Villany without Fear, not considering the
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Gracious Design of God's Long-suffering, and Patience towards them. But their Judgment slumbers not, tho' their Souls fall into a dead Sleep in this Life, till with Consternation they shall awake encompassed with Flames in the next, without any Possibility or Hope to escape. There are some excellent Remarks in the Apocryphal Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*, which if seriously ponder'd, might be of effectual Use to awaken stupid thoughtless Sinners, out of their dangerous Carnal Security : Part of them are delivered by way of Address to God, in the Eleventh Chapter of *Wisdom*. *Thy Almighty Hand that made the World of Matter without Form, [in a less regular Form, whilst it was a Chaos at first, but afterwards did give it a uniform Figure,] wanted not means to send among them a Multitude of Bears, or fierce Lions, or unknown Wild-Beasts full of Rage, newly created, breathing out either a fiery Vapour, or filthy Scents of scatter'd Smoke, or shooting horrible Sparks out of their Eyes; whereof not only the Harm might dispatch them at once, but also the terrible sight utterly destroy them: yea, and without these, might they have fallen down with one blast, being persecuted of Vengeance, and scatter'd abroad thro' the Breath of thy Power: But thou hast order'd all things in Measure, Number and Weight: For thou canst shew thy great Strength at all times, when thou wilt; and who may withstand the Power of thine Arm? For the whole World before thee, is as the little Grain of the Ballance; yea, as the Drop of the Morning Dew that falleth down upon the Earth: But thou hast Mercy upon all; for thou canst do all Things, and winkest at the Sins of Men, because they should amend. Therefore chastenest*

chastenest thou them by little and little that offend, and warnest them by putting them in remembrance, wherein they have offended; that leaving their Wick- edness, they may believe on thee, O Lord. Thus executing thy Judgments by little and little, thou gavest them place of Repentance, even tho' not ig- norant that they were a naughty Generation. And yet thou didst not, for fear of any Man, spare them for the things wherein they sinned. For who should say, what hast thou done? Or, who shall withstand thy Judgment? Or, who shall accuse thee for the Nations that perish, whom thou hast made? Or, who shall come to stand against thee, to be revenged for the Unrighteous Men? for neither is there any God but thou, that careth for all, to whom thou might- est shew that thy Judgment is not unright; neither shall King or Tyrant be able to set his Face against thee, for any whom thou hast punish'd. But thou mastering thy Power, judgest with Equity, and or- derest us with great favour. However, when Men who have liv'd dissolutely, will not believe that thou art full of Power, thou shewest thy Strength, after thou hast given time and place whereby they might be delivered from their Malice; then they that would not be reformed by such Correction, shall feel a Judg- ment worthy of God.

What a noble Sermon and Persuasive to Re- pentance hath that excellent Writer made, in the foresaid Collection? And you must observe, that the whole Argumentation and Rhetorick of it, is grounded upon the serious Considerati- on of God's Power exerted in the Creation of the Universe, and the Multitude of Worlds, whereof it consists. And 'tis so cogent, and press'd Home with such an Energy upon the Consciences of Careless and sensual Men, that

I could not forbear setting it before them, because 'tis a Book seldom read in Parts, and by fewer intirely.

But among all Offenders, none appear from the fore-mention'd Considerations so vain and self condemn'd, as the Atheistical Tribe, who affect to be ignorant of God, tho' the Being of a God is as necessary for the Comfort of thinking Creatures, as the Beams of the Sun are for the support of our Animal Subsistence. How sottish and how darkned in their Understanding must they be, who cannot out of the Good things that are seen, know him that *IS*; tho' not so seen, because too great to be exposed to Sense? Strange blindness indeed! that Men should not so far consider such Works as to discern; or a more *monstrous Ingratitude*! if tho' they do discern, they will not acknowledge this Tremendous Work-master; for by the Greatness and Beauty of the Creatures proportionably, the first Author of them is seen: The Heart of those Wretches, who either cannot or will not see him, is Ashes, their Hope viler than Earth, and their Life of less Value than Clay: For they appear ignorant of themselves in not knowing him, who inspir'd into Man an active Soul, and breathed into them a living Spirit. I shall conclude this Head with the Advice of the Son of Sirac, Eccl. v. 3. Say not, who shall controul me for my Works? For the Lord will surely revenge thy Pride. Say not, I have sinned, and what Harm hath happened unto me? For [tho'] the Lord is Long-suffering, he will in no wise let thee go. Concerning Propitiation, be not without Fear to add Sin unto Sin; and say not, his Mercy is great, he will be pacified for the Multitude of my Sins:

Sins : For Mercy and Wrath come from him, and his Indignation resteth upon Sinners. Mercy first, but Wrath after obstinate Abuses of Mercy. Make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and put not off from Day to Day ; for suddenly shall the Wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy Security thou shalt be destroy'd, and perish in the Day of Vengeance. For Error and Darkness had their beginning with Sinners, and Evil shall wax old with them that Glory therein. The most High hateth Sinners, and will repay Vengeance unto the Ungodly, and keepeth them against the mighty Day of their Punishment. As God is a long while mighty to forgive, so also he is as mighty to pour out Displeasure. As he hath separated his Light from the Darkness with an Adamant, so he will make a plain difference between the Righteous and the Wicked. Say not, Profane Scoffer, I will hide my self from the Lord, shall any remember me from above ? I shall not be remembered among so many People ; for what is my Soul among such an infinite Number of Creatures ? Behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, the Deep, and the Earth, and all that therein is, shall be moved, when he shall visit : The Mountains also, and the Foundations of the Earth shall be shaken with trembling, when the Lord looketh upon them : No Heart can think upon these things worthily : and who is able to conceive his Ways ? It is a Tempest which no Man can see : Who can declare the Works of his Justice ? Or who can endure them ? For his Covenant is afar off, and the trial of all things is in the End.

C H A P. IV. S E C T. IV.

*The Consideration of a Plurality of Worlds,
prov'd a Preservative against PRIDE and
VANITY.*

PRide made *Angels Devils, Nebuchadnezzar* a Beast, and *Herod* a Feast for Worms before he was dead : And *Vanity* rendred *Rabbins* and *Philosophers* Enemies to the Cross of Christ. Rash Censures and Precipitant Enterprises owe their Original to this odious Vice ; but with the well-advised and the lowly dwelleth Wisdom and sound Judgment. True Philosophy and Gratitude both to our Creator, and other Benefactors, is no where found, but in Hearts full of *God* and *Humility* : A due Sense of *God* and his Magnificent Creations, guards against a fondness for *Vain* Philosophy. Now all Philosophy is vain, which contradicts the *Word*, or vilifies the *Works* of *God*, and the Inscrutable Ordinances of his Providence. Of this Stamp are all *Heresies* truly so called ; all the Hellish Maxims of Atheists ; all the new-fangled Schemes of *Deists*, *Arrians*, and *Socinians* : In like manner, whatever Philosophy affects to be Wise above what is written, and not according to the Measure of Faith ; or to make Men more Righteous, than the Rules of the Christian Revelation, (which is the Case of the *Quakers*, and Pretenders to Works of *Supererogation*) is vain, as well as that which is directly against the Contents of Scripture : For the

the Scripture is not only the *Rule*, but also the *Boundary* of our *Faith* and *Morality*. The Charge stands good too, against all false Pretenders to Philosophy, or other Supernatural Gifts of the Spirit; and moreover, against all Enthusiastick *Visionaries*, and conceited Dreamers of their being the peculiar Favourites of Heaven; as also all Introducers of more perfect Dispensations of Religion, without a Commission from the Great Orderer of *Dispersative*, as well as all other Worlds. Persons, I say, of all these several Characters, are infected with vain Philosophy, an inordinate fondness for Novelty and Upstart Systems, and with a conceited Opinion of their private Understanding, and more peculiar dearness to God. Against this Virulent Leprosie of both the *Head* and the *Heart*, which involves some in the Guilt of Prophane *Collusions* and Imposture, and betrays others into dangerous Snares and Delusions of the Devil; no wise Lover of his own Immortal Soul, and of the Souls of his Neighbours, can be too strictly upon his Guard. We ought to Watch and Pray, against giving way to the Temptation of growing thus Wise in our own Conceit; lest Professing our selves Wise this way, we become the worst sort of Fools, (*viz.*) Engines of Satan, wire-drawn by the Policy of the Kingdom of Darkness, to do disservice to the Cause of God and his Christ. *Be not then over-Righteous; Be not over-Wise; for why shouldst thou destroy thy self?* Be not, I say, over-Wicked by such wrong and arrogant Claims to Wisdom; for why shouldst thou die before thy time? Seek and acquiesce in the Wisdom which is from above, and the Righteousness

teousness which God commends and requires. Let us beware of a Wisdom falsely so called, and of a Righteousness of our own Invention. *Vain Men*, tho' born like the *Wild Asses Colt*, would fain be wise, by a Wisdom not common to the Dutiful Creatures of God ; but by some sort of Wisdom, which may distinguish them remarkably from other Wise Men : *True* and *Orthodox*, being an *Old-fashion'd Wisdom*, will not content their Aims ; 'tis not odd enough for them ; nor so singular as they want to appear. They are all for a *Lucifer's* aspiring Wisdom : They want an Earth better made than ours ; and they wonder that so many things happen in this World, and in Others, which in their Judgment, (and might they have but their Wills,) should never come to pass ; they think that many Worlds and Creatures might be preserved in a more regular Beauty, and a more lasting Consistence ; nay, and that they might more conveniently be govern'd by other sorts of Administrations. Had they made Creatures, none of them should have fallen, or been capable of falling ; or had they suffered any to fall, all that fell should have been redeemed effectually ; and redeemed too by a less Mysteries Method of Redemption, than what the receiv'd Doctrine of Christ's Incarnation and propitiatory Sacrifice, represents the Redemption affirmed in the New Testament to be. And as some Worlds, according to their Models, would never have been Built : So others would be quite depopulated, had their Platforms succeeded. All their Worlds must have been filled with Men, cloath'd with Bodies of good solid Flesh. *Angels, Spirits, Im-*
material

material Substances, and Souls separated from Bodies, are Beings of too airy a Contexture, to inhabit any World in their Conception. There would have been no such Place as an Hell, in a Creation of their Building and Governance; much less should any Angels or Men be eternally confin'd and punish'd there. Other Professors of vain Philosophy would, Beings quite contrary to the former, have made all pure Spirits like Angels, without being join'd, and unequally yok'd to Flesh or Matter, in the *Strata* of any part of their Substance: They would have ordained no Removal of any Order of Creatures, from one World to another; but in the Decrees of their Providence, all Classes of them should have remained to the last, in the same State as they were put into at first: Nay, and from the first, they would have planted all alike, in the compleatest Worlds that could be design'd and built for them. They would have had Religion the same thing among all Creatures, and the dispensation of it equally perfect every where to Creatures of the same Kind, and throughout every State and Age of the said Creatures. 'Tis not enough for them to know, whether things be thus and thus ordained by the great Governor of the Universe; but they must know, with the Skill of an Anatomist, the Ground-work of all his Proceedings, and *Why*, and *Wherefore*, this and that matter is so and so order'd.

These, and such like are the Humors of Men drunk with Pride, and swell'd with an inordinate Opinion of their own Understanding. O Vain Impertinence! O Arrogant Curiosity! 'Tis hence that this Age, as many others be-
fore

fore it, proves pester'd with such Swarms of *Heresiarchs*; new Principles are thought necessary to set off the Face of Religion with a false Dye, and to corrupt the Vitals of it: Nay *Vertue* and *Government* must settle and subsist upon new-made Foundations. Now none of these bold Intruders into things too high for them, would thus Pride themselves in the Idols of their deceiv'd Imaginations, if they had seen the King of the Universe so distinctly as they might, under the Character of the Lord of Hosts: Upon such an awful Theory of God, they would so consider him as to be afraid, and confess themselves undone with all their Abortive Hypotheses, and Men of Unclean Lips, for having blasphemed the Counsels of the most High, and defiled his stately Plans, with their awkward Corrections. *Who am I, (would each of them say) that I should mix my Counsels with the Counsels, of the Lord of Hosts, and take upon me to plead with him about his Ways?* Let them contemplate God, as the Maker and Governour of more Worlds than they can number, and then they must own his Judgments unsearchable, and his Ways past their finding out; and yet withal God is Just and Righteous in all his Judgments, and in all his Proceedings. No Angel should say unto him, *What dost thou?* or pretend to be his Councillor. With God is Power and Wisdom, and he giveth no one an account of his Ways; for he is *GOD* and not *MAN*: His Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways as our Ways; but as far above them, as the Heaven of Heavens is distant from the Earth. *It is the Glory of so Great a God to conceal a Thing: Neither*

ther the *Amplitude*, nor the *Depth* of his Decrees can be found out by the searching of bounded and created Minds. God has made many Worlds; more Princes than Worlds; more Creatures than Princes: If therefore the Heart of Princes is unsearchable, and no Man knoweth the Secrets of Mans Heart, but the Spirit of the Man within him; What Spirit under the Spirit of God knoweth the deep Things of God? For what Man is he, that can know the Counsels of God? Or who can think how spacious and extensive the Will of the Lord is, about the Administration of his Universe, and all the Worlds contained therein? 'Tis a Task above the Capacity of Angels, much more of Men. For the Thoughts of Mortal Men are miserably short and scanty, and their Conjectures and Devices uncertain. For the corruptible Body presseth down Souls entombed in the Flesh, and immersed in Blood; and the earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind, musing upon such an intricate Variety of Scenes, and the astonishing Transactions thereof. How imperfectly do we guess at the winding Policies of an earthly Court? And 'tis not without Labour that we find out those of them, upon which we think Right; and yet these Designs are in a manner before us. Whose Searches therefore shall be sufficient to find out the Things that are in Heaven; and to solve the Difficulties of those Occurrences which are revealed to us in part? Many are the Devices of one Man's Heart; and many Men have still far more Minds and Conceptions of the same Thing; and all of them often prove alike Vain: But every Counsel of the Lord stands fast upon im-

immoveable Foundations of Dominion, Wisdom, and Might; and in every World that he hath made, and the Administration of it, they shall stand: But none of these Counsels are further known than God gives Wisdom, and shews them to us by the Light of his Holy Spirit.

Let us not therefore be so Imprudent, as to seek out the Things that are too hard for us; nor undertake Inquiries, or interpose our Censures upon Administrations above our Reach to understand, and above our Strength to alter, could any Fault be justly found with them: This is to be curious in unnecessary Matters, and to profess the Knowledge we have not. Secret Things belong to the Knowledge of the Lord our God; but they are not needful for us to know. The Government of God's Worlds has no Dependance upon our Thinking; But the Things that are revealed, and commanded us to do, do belong to us: Upon these we ought to think with Reverence, and 'tis our Glory, and our Happiness to obey them with Care. They truly glorify their Souls, who thus glorifie them in Meekness, and give them Honour according to, but not above, the Dignity of them.

Most assuredly, All the Works of the Lord are done in Judgment from the Beginning; those of them which appear as rough as the Moss upon the Earth, to our defective Sight, are found, by Views of them in a true Light, Smooth and Uniform as the polish'd Glass. From the respective Times of his creating every World, he hath dispos'd and marshal'd them severally in a beautiful Order. None of

them hindreth another, and they will never disobey his Word. *This World* and *Others* are fill'd with his Blessings, and had there been no *Sinners*, there had been no *Hell*; but the meanest among them had been a *Paradise* to those who dwell therein. 'Tis their own Fault, if they are not fill'd with the *Experimental* Knowledge of Understanding; For God hath shewed them Good and Evil: He hath so far set an Eye upon their Hearts, as to give them affecting Sentiments of the greatness of his Works: Pride, Envy, and Ingratitude have perverted, or Sensuality has stupified their Thoughts, if they do not glory in his Marvellous Acts, and declare his Works with Understanding and Gladness. The Elect always delight to praise his Holy Name for them. Their Eyes where-ever they are, and which way soever they turn themselves, behold the Majesty of his Glory, whose Eyes are Ten thousand times brighter than the Sun; and where-ever they move, they hear, with the Instructive Ear of the Soul, his Glorious Voice. What they know of him and his Works, they celebrate with plain and particular Acknowledgments; and what they know not so well, (which infinitely surpasseth what is known to them,) they admire with a more awful and silent Homage. They know him to be King of all, and themselves to be but Earth and Ashes. To what *Seraph* hath he given Power to describe his Works to Perfection? Or Where is the *Cherub* that shall enumerate all his Noble Acts? Who among all the Hosts above, shall compute the Forces of his Majesty, or reckon in Order his whole Retinue, or the Mercies shower'd down upon them? What there-

therefore is Man? And wherewith shall he do it? *As for the wondrous Works of the Lord, there may nothing be taken from them; neither may any thing be put unto them; neither can the Ground of them be found out: When a Man hath done, then he beginneth, and when he leaveth off, then he shall be doubtful.* As a Drop of Water is unto the Sea, and a single Grain of Gravel to all the Sand of its Shore; so is the Mind of Man, and vastly less to the boundless Unoriginated Mind, who fram'd all Worlds, and works Wonders of Mercy throughout the same. Wherefore let us bless the Lord in all his Works, for they are all exceeding Good. None may say, *To what purpose is this, or that? such, or such a Thing may be spar'd:* For in due time, the very Moles of the Earth shall discern their Beauty, and they will be all well approved. Some of his Ways are Stumbling-Blocks to the Wicked, but they are all of them plain to the Humble, and to the Holy. They are all good to the Godly, but to Sinners they are turn'd into Evil. The Jaundise of an Evil Conscience, and a darkned Mind discolour them to the Malignants of God's Creation; for as the Wise draw Antidotes from the Flesh of Scorpions: so they suck Poison from the Rose and Violet. Oh how desirable and lovely are all God's Works! and that a Man may see even to a Spark. They all live and remain for ever for divers Uses, and are all obedient: All things are double, one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect; that is, insufficient to answer the End for which it was made. *One Thing establisheth the Good of another, and who shall be filled with beholding his Glory?*

He alone who dwelleth above the Heavens, can understand their prodigious Height. The more Created Minds do soar and search, the more they will Marvel, and the more humbly will they be convinc'd, that they can't comprehend the Creations of God, or every Thing that hath passed, or daily doth pass in them; much less can they Divine what will pass in perfecter Creations among the glorified, in remoter Times to come.

The whole Fourth Chapter of the Second Book of *Esdras*, is an edifying Satyr upon the extravagant Curiosity of Presumptuous Criticks upon the Creation, and deserves to be perused by us at our leisure. Besides which, give me leave to recommend to you the intire Book of *Job*; especially from the beginning of the xxxviii. to the end of the xli. Chapter, to the serious Consideration of *Heretical Schematists*, and *Profane Scoffers* and *Speculators*; and then, 'tis to be hoped, they will be covered with Shame for their Folly, and that with *Job* they will learn Humility, and say, *I know that thou canst do every Thing, and that no Thought can be withholden with thee: Who is he that hideth Counsel without Knowledge? Wherefore have I uttered Things that I understood not? Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not? Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me: I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

Indeed, this single Consideration, that we know not the number of the Worlds God hath made, nor the Number of those which he may be pleased to make hereafter; nor the Dependence

dance of one upon another ; nor the various Methods of God's Superintendance and Disposal of the several Hosts of them, would prevent a great many Pragmatical Expostulations with Divine Providence: And the discovery of these Particulars at the last Day, will strike the Infidel Dumb, and make him tremble then, as the Devils do before-hand ; tho' he will not believe a God and a future State now.

C H A P. IV.

S E C T. V.

Beneficence recommended; by our View of a Plurality of Worlds.

GOD, (whose uncorruptible Spirit is in all Things,) must be a Being of a very Beneficent Temper. The Love that brought all Things, except God, into Being, must be as Immense, and far more so, as the Extent of all the Creations he hath made: Envy and Malevolence are not creating Tempers, as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* very closely argues, Chap. xi. 24, 25, 26. *Thou lovest all the Things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made : For never wouldst thou have made any Thing, if thou hadst hated it. And how could any Thing have endured, if it had not been thy Will? Or been preserved, if not called by thee? Bountifulness* (saith the Son of Sirach,) *is as a most fruitful Garden, and Mercifulness endureth for ever,* Ecc. xl 17. And surely, had not God been a liberal Being, so many beautiful Paradises had

not been delineated in his Eternal Ideas of all the Worlds, that were produced by him according to them: *Wisdom* had not contriv'd them, nor *Omnipotence* erected them, unless an essential *Benignity* in the Divine Nature, had moved him to resolve upon the framing of them. Boundless Love, spake both them, and all the Creatures that inhabit them, into Being. If Love then be the generous Fountain which thus Overflows, and diffuses it self at length into an Ocean of Worlds, and fills them with Creatures that bear some faint Resemblance of their Maker in the Operations of *Thought* and *Will*; certainly no Ambition can better become the finite Minds, which owe their Being to Benevolence, than a Desire to be Beneficent in their Proportion, as God is Beneficent in an unmeasurable Extent: He visits every Point of the vast Circumference of the Universe with his Goodness, and sustains all Things lodg'd in the Bowels, and the profoundest Caverns thereof. 'Tis hence God has annex'd such affecting Sentiments of Pleasure to those Acts by which Creatures multiply their Kind, and are Instruments under the Blessing of Providence of introducing New-Creatures into the World. 'Tis hence that Holy Angels find such Pleasure in the Performance of those Good Offices, which further the Salvation of the Souls of Men. And how insipid are the Pleasures of Generation to that Delight, with which the Mind is refreshed, when we have made the Widows Heart to sing for Joy, by a seasonable Relief of her self, or her destitute Fatherless Children? And yet our Satisfaction rises to a greater Height, when our Care to Edu-
cate

cate such Children in the Fear of God, and the Knowledge of his Love and Laws has been crown'd with Success: For then, not only the Health of their thriving Bodies, but the Promising Innocence of their Youth, returns us a double Portion of Joy for our Charity towards them. And yet still a frèer Tide of Joy arises within us, when our Spiritual Love has gain'd a Conquest over a Profligate Friend, and by our incessant Prayers and Counsels, God has converted him from the Errour of his Ways.

The Beneficence of Created Minds exerts it self several Ways: But most like God, when Souls are cheered with the vivific Rays of it: And when liberal Men devise liberal Things to the Publick, they do Good like a Creator. God builds *Worlds*; they build *Bridges* for the Travellers Relief in Danger and Weariness; *Hospitals* for the Sick; *Colleges* for the encouragement of Minds of the noblest Mould and Extraction; *Alms-houses* for Widows, the Aged, and Helpless *Veterani*; *Charity-Schools* for the Religious Education of Orphans and other Poor Children: These are a kind of Creations: Angels rejoice when they are founded; and Devils do less Mischief by their Temptations, upon the Account of them: A Thousand Blessings attend such Benefactors: Ages, Posterities, Generations call them blessed. May these Patriots in the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus increase in Number, and in all the increase of God by the growth of Grace and Virtue: May their Designs go on with a Success that may circulate throughout all the Nations of the Earth: Come *Lord Jesus*, and reign among us.

C H A P. IV. S E C T. VI.

*Contempt of Death prov'd to be promoted, by
Contemplation upon a Multitude of Worlds
and Creations.*

BESIDES the foremention'd Benefits which we receive from our Belief of a Plurality of Worlds, this is none of the least, that it arms us against a servile fear. of Death, by buoying up our Hearts with a stedfast Perswasion, that our Souls are Immortal; and that our Bodies will be restored to Life in due time. We may now cease to ask, *which Way can our Souls subsist out of Bodies? How can they act without organized Matter to act in, and upon? How shall the scattered Particles of Dust be reassembled again, and compacted into the same Structure of Flesh, and Bones, and Blood, whereof it did consist before?* Is this too hard for the Builder of such a Multitude of Worlds? Can't he who made 'em out of Nothing, with Ease recompact them out of Something? If we either doubt of the Immortality of our Souls, or of the Resurrection of our Bodies, we err grossly, as the Sadducees did of old, neither knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God. Let us look into our Graves with less Horror and Reluctance. God advances us from them, as he did Joseph from the Pit to the command of a Scepter. Our Bodies, indeed, will see Corruption; they will not, like Christ's, be raised *on the Third Day* from the Dead: However, He (in
whose

whose Book all our Members are written, and by whom they were curiously wrought and fashioned, and prepared to be Vessels and Seats of animal and vital Operations,) will not suffer them always to lie in Bonds ; but will awaken them out of their present unactive State, and speak *Life and Vigour* into them again. *To know God's Power, in the Judgment of the Wise Man, is the Root of Immortality.* This Knowledge we cannot want, after the sight of many Worlds, and all of them made by God : There is nothing wanting to fix and invigorate our Conviction, but more frequent and intent Meditation upon his Power display'd, and manifested throughout all the Regions of the Universe. Shall not he who supports Worlds, who supports an Universe, hold our Souls in Being ? Shall not he also be able to re-animate our Bodies with them, according to his Promise, who Peoples an Infinity of Worlds with innumerable Armies of more radiant and active Inhabitants, than Men ever were in their best Estate ? The former Undertaking has been accomplish'd with Ease, therefore the latter cannot miscarry. *Fear not therefore the Sentence of Death, remember them that have been before thee, and that come after, for this is the Sentence of the Lord over all Flesh ; but not over all Souls ; nor over any, in one Sense.* No Soul shall become insensible, or cease to be Conscious of some Sensations or other, after the Dissolution of the Body : The Light of no Human Mind shall be so far quenched and extinguished. But Souls may die in another Sense, by being conscious to no Sensations of Pleasure : When all their Thoughts are Horror and Pain in the Operation

tion and result of them, then they die; then they are separated from God; and like the troubled Sea, are never at Rest, but continually tofs'd and agitated with Sentiments of Shame, and Reproach, and Anxiety, seeking Peace, but finding none. Now all this is owing to Guilt, and our final Impenitence for our Sins: The Soul that sinneth and repenteth not as it ought, before its Day of Grace, its State of Tryal is expir'd, shall thus die the Second Death. Men unprepared for the State of separate Souls, may well tremble at the prospect of Death, when the first Death of the Body consigns them over to the second Death of the Soul. Men whose Peace is yet to be made with an offended God, have no Pleasure in the very Foresight of those Eternal Worlds which are fore-ordained for them: Their being not reconciled to him, embitters the bright Ideas of even *Immortality*, and a *Resurrection* to them. O horrible *Condition*! But if we are in the Mire; don't let us stick in it: Let us struggle with our Corruptions, and burst these worst of Bonds asunder. Let us acquaint our selves with God instantly, in an accepted time: Let us be dead to Sin, and awake to Righteousness, and then our Souls will live when our Bodies shall be dead: then they will not only subsist, and be privy to the Operation of Thought within themselves, but their Thoughts will abound in Pleasure and Delight, and be transported with the Prospect of the future Resurrection of their Bodies. Let us thus recover our selves out of a State of Sin; and then, tho' Nature shrink at the manner of our passing from this into another World, yet Faith
and

and Hope will prevail over Humane Frailty, in the trying Conflict of our last Agonies. Two such old Companions and fast-Friends, as a Soul and Body that have constituted one Person, will be loth to part: The Reluctance in some Degree is innocent, and consistent with the Grace of Submission to God's will; 'twas found in the Manhood of Christ who did no Sin; and yet he said, *Father, If it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.* God hath ordained this Reluctance to leave our Bodies suddenly for Wise Reasons: One is that the Victory of Faith and Resignation may appear the greater, when (notwithstanding such an innate Reluctance,) our trembling Souls dare to follow the Hand of Heaven into an unknown Country, into an unknown Life, as *Abraham*, not knowing whither they go: But this they know, they shall be Happy, because they shall be with the Lord: And therefore, as *Christ* in this case said before, so say all the Faithful at their Departure, *Nevertheless, not my Will, but thy Will be done.* Devout *David's* Appeal on this Occasion cannot be forgotten. *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? Yea, tho' I walk thro' the Vally of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil.*

C H A P. IV. S E C T. VII.

*The Doctrine of a Plurality of Worlds, prov'd
serviceable to the advancement of Heaven-
ly-Mindedness.*

TH E Heavens being thus open'd in a Plurality of Worlds, paint out our Immortality to us, as we have seen, in the brightest Colours, and sets the most lively Portraiture of it before us. We have not, as *Scipio*, seen them in a Dream; nor does our Prospect depend upon the false Glasses of *Poerick Fiction* in the Verses of *Claudian*:

*Amissum ne crede diem, sunt altera Nobis
Sidera, sunt Orbes alii, Lumenque videbis
Purius, Elysiumque magis mirabere Solem.*

No: The Word of God hath given us a truer View of the Worlds above, than *Pompey's Ghost* was conceiv'd by *Lucan*, to be entertain'd with.

*At non in Phariâ Manes jacuere favillâ,
Nec Cinis exiguus tantam compefcuit umbram.
Prosiluit busto, semiustaque membra relinquens
Degeneremque rogam, sequitur Convexa Tonantis,
Qua Niger astriferis connectitur Axibus Æther;
Quodque patet Terras inter Lunaque meatus,
Semidei Manes habitant, quos ignea virtus
Innocuos vita, patientes atheris imi
Fecit, & aternos animam collegit in Orbes.*

Non

*Non illuc auro positi, nec thure sepulti
Perveniunt, illic postquam se lumine vero
Implevit, stellasque vagas miratur, & astra
Fixa Polis, vidit quanta sub nocte jaceret
Nostra Dies, risitque sui ludibria Trunci.*

As God by his Spirit hath shewn us a Multitude of Worlds, so we are inform'd of our Relation to them, and our Interest in them. Man, said a Philosopher, was created to contemplate the Worlds which God has made: Man was not made for this World only. The Fashion of this World passeth away; and we are to look upon our selves as Pilgrims in it, and not to set our Affections on Things below. We have not indeed the Prophet *Habacuc's*, or the *Protomartyr Steven's* clear *Vision* of the Higher Scenes of Glory; but we see enough of them to engage our Thoughts and Affections in a prevailing tendency towards them. Lift we up therefore our Souls towards the Heavens, and the Lord who made them; *These* can travail aloft, tho' our Bodies are confined to the Earth. And here, charming views surround and distract us: *Ideas* come on as fast, as our *Words* come slow. They grow too fine to bear being represented by any *sensible* Image, or Delineation: We have no other Language for them, but Rapture and Extasie; a Language of their own inspiring. Our Curiosity grows upon us, and devours as much of the Prospect as our thinking can Grasp; but 'tis too great to be run over by Eye or Thought, with their swiftest Excursions into Plains of so unmeasurable an Extent: It oversets the strongest Understanding in its Attempts to survey it.

Ima-

Imagination (that can magnifie most Things) faints before it ; 'tis dazled with the wideness of it ; it staggers and grows giddy with the View. O how Great is thy Goodness, O God, which thou hast laid up for them that love thee ! *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive the Joys which thou hast prepared for them.* They are like the Worlds that thou hast made, larger than we can comprehend, more than we can number, and too Magnificent for us to describe and perceive, with a neat and distinct Perception. It sufficeth us, O Lord, that we have only a general Knowledge of them at present, and we praise thy Name, for giving us a firm and stable Assurance of a clearer and more satisfactory Sight of them hereafter : Then our Brook of Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy, will become a River, and our River become a Sea ; then thou that fillest all Things with thy Wisdom, as *Phison*, as *Tigris*, in the Season of New-fruits, wilt cause our Understanding to abound like *Euphrates*, and as *Jordan* in the time of Harvest : Doctrine shall diffuse it self as *Light*, and as *Geon* in the time Vintage.

But tho' the more satisfactory Acquaintance with the Region, and Inhabitants of the Heavens is reserv'd for our future State ; yet there are several Particulars revealed already about them : And upon these our Meditations should be frequently employ'd : We ought not even now to be perfect Strangers to these sublimer Subjects : Our best Seasons for thinking should be dedicated to them : For even an Imperfect Acquaintance with them has a mighty Power

Power to polish our rough Natures; to refine the original Sordidness of our Tempers; and to purify our Hearts from all filthyness of Flesh and Spirit. Could our Genius enlarge its Knowledge as far as *Solomon's* did extend; so that nothing could escape it, from the Cedar of *Libanus*, to the Herb that grows upon the Wall; 'twould be of little value to us, without a competent Knowledge of Heavenly Things. In much Knowledge of that kind alone, is much Grief and Vanity: Even skill in the Motions of the Orbs, and the Rules of Seasons, and a Discovery of a vast Number of them, would give a generous Soul but a melancholy turn of Thinking, that could not tell how to obtain an Inheritance in any of them, nor to qualify himself by suitable Dispositions and Accomplishments, to visit some of the innumerable Courts of Heaven, and to meet with a gracious Reception at them. Wherefore, since the Revelation of the Mysteries of the Gospel hath brought a Plurality of Worlds, and the Inhabitants of the Immortal Scenes to Light, let us use this Light, and enliven our Contemplation upon God and a Future State, and other Divine Subjects, by thinking much and often upon them. A Thousand Difficulties that are started in Divinity, would not appear so formidable as they do now, were this Subject, and the Scriptures that treat of it, more narrowly search'd into and examin'd: For altho' no Man can by the closest Thinking, or the most devout perusal of Divine Writ, find out all the Works which God hath wrought, and daily is doing, from the beginning to the End; yet it would quickly prevent

vent many senseless Cavils ; and Men would not only by a general Knowledge of God's Wisdom and Perfections, but moreover by very pleasing Observations in particular, be firmly perswaded that he hath made every World, and every Thing in it, beautiful in his time. Consider seriously the *Work* of God ; not this or that, but his *Universe* ; and then 'twill appear that what seems crooked, whilst look'd upon in a separate view like a Stick in the Water, is really strait in it self, consider'd in its proper Element and Relation. By this means we shall know that *whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever ; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it : And God doth it that Men should fear before him.*

This World accordingly, as a part of the Universe of God, is good in its time and place, and to serve the Purposes for which he created it ; but 'tis but a part of it, and inhabited for the most part by vain and corrupt Creatures : It ought not therefore to engross our Hearts. Look up on high, sometimes see the *Worlds* and *Societies* which deserve your utmost Affections, and most earnest Pursuits. Shake Hands with all inordinate Cares, and unlawful Complacencies in terrene Enjoyments. Heaven is the only Home of the Happy ; every Anchor of the Soul that is sure and stedfast, must be fix'd in that High and Holy Place. The Possessions, Delights and Conversation of that World, bear the Stress of the most ardent Zeal to attain it : That will fully answer our Hopes, and fulfill our Desires : Nay, 'twill as far exceed them, as the Glory of it is above the strength of our most aspiring

ring Conceptions to apprehend it. Adieu therefore to Smoke and Dust; let us no longer love the World, nor the Things of the World; *For all that is in the World is the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.* We have free access now unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable Company of Angels; To the general Assembly of the Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the New-Covenant. Let therefore our Thoughts, and all the Passions of our Souls, with one consent, take a flight on high; and enter within the Veil; whither the Fore-runner is for us entred, even Jesus, made an High-Priest for ever, after the Order, of *Melchisedec*.

C H A P. IV. S E C T. VIII.

CHRIST'S DIVINITY *illustrated by a Plurality of Worlds.*

THE mention of Christ's Royal Priesthood, naturally leads us to the Consideration of the Supereminent Excellency of his Person, as 'tis display'd in his Creation of, and Sovereignty over all the Worlds and Creations that are in being: By him, we have heard, *Heb. i. 2.* that the Worlds were made: To him we read, *Eph. i. 20, 21.* all Worlds, not one excepted, are subject; for, *When God raised*

him from the Dead, he set him at his own Right-hand in the Heavenly places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come. We meet also with a Parallel to this Scripture, Phil. ii. 9, 10. God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; That at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth. Nor does St. Paul omit this Remark in his Epistle to the Colossians, Chap. i. 15, 16, 17. Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the First-born of every Creature: [Creation,] For by him were all Things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers; all Things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all Things, and by him all Things consist. And as we there find him supreme Prince and Sovereign of all the Angelical Creations: So we find him, Chap. ii. 15. triumphant Conquerour of all the Diabolical Worlds: And having spoil'd Principalities and Powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. I shall just mention one more, 1 Pet. iii. 22. Who is gone into Heaven, and is on the Right-hand of God; Angels, and Authorities, and Powers, being made subject unto him. We have already been seeing a Plurality of Heavens, and the Glory of God display'd by them; let us now make a Pause with St. Stephen, and behold Jesus far above all Heavens, and standing at the Right-hand of God there: Surely these Characters are too great for meer Humanity, or a *Falitious Divinity* of the highest Emi-
nency

nency and Exaltation, to be able to sustain them. O Blessed Jesu! Do Angels, nay Devils thus own thy Deity? And shall Man dare to deny it? Do the Highest Creations bow to thy Scepter? What ungrateful Creatures then must we be, whenever we presume to doubt of thy God-head, or to revolt from the Allegiance we owe thee? The Love wherewith he redeemed us, appears now as Immense, as all the Creations that belong to his Dominions; and as far more so, as he is higher than all of them: When he vouchsafed to be Incarnate for our sakes, He shew'd an amazing Condescension indeed. Thro' what a vast Tract of Heavens, did the gracious Son of God descend, before he manifested his Glory in this obscurer Orb? His Humility is as inexpressible as his Greatness: The Merit of such a Sacrifice, as that of the Body assum'd by so August a Prince, could not be other than Infinite; Prayers and Praises, the strictest Obedience, the lowest Homage, and the most affectionate and awful Gratitude we can express, are the best Testimonies of Respect that we can offer him; But they fall so short of the excellency of his Person, and the value of the Obligations he hath laid upon us, that it requires the Condescension of a *Jesu* to accept them; and had we not been assur'd of his Acceptance, our Tender of them had had an Air of Profaneness.

C H A P. IV. S E C T. IX.

*An Exhortation to Christian FORTITUDE,
drawn from the Belief of a Plurality of
Worlds.*

IT is ordained, that through much Tribulation, we shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven; for we wrestle not only with Flesh and Blood; but with Principalities and Powers in high Places. However, we have no reason to despond, if we will look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right-hand of the Throne of God. As a Man, he suffered for our Example, and we may learn *Patience* from him, as well as all other Virtues; nay in a more signal and distinguishing manner; for he was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief. And as he *taught* us Obedience by his Sufferings, And as the Consideration of him as a *Man*, teaches us Patience, Resignation to God, Self-denial, and a brave and resolute Resistance of the Devil and of all our Spiritual Enemies; so the considering him as *God*, will much more strengthen us to strive against Sin, and keep us from being wearied and faint in our Minds, under any Afflictions. That he is God, hath appeared from his having built all Worlds; for the Apostle tells us, *He that built all Things is GOD.* For this Reason he is able to help us in all Extremities;

tremities; to manifest his Strength in our Weakness, and to save all to the uttermost, who come to his Father by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. We have free access to the Throne of Grace, and may obtain it to help us in any kind of need, if we will be importunate with God in Prayer for it.

This World is a Vale of Tears; a State of Tryal and Imperfection at the best; and Conflicts are the Law of the Field: But other Worlds are design'd for us, and unless we are Negligent and Faint-hearted, we may by the Interest and Assistance of Jesus, climb into some of the Happy Orbs at length, where Poverty, Sickness, Disgrace, Imprisonment, and Temptation of any sort have no place. Now Afflictions sanctified to us by Patience, by devout Retirement, by an Heroic trust in God, and acquiescence in the severer Disposals of his Providence, may contribute very much towards our being prepar'd for an Admission into one or more of the heavenly Mansions of the Blessed: For they help to wean our Affections from Vain and Sinful Delights, and to mortifie that Pride, that Carnal Ambition, and those fleshly Lusts which War against our Souls, and hang like Weights upon them and hinder their free Ascent to the Worlds of Unforfeitable Bliss and Glory. Provided we have a safe arrival thither, we have no Reason to Complain, tho' we swam thro' Torrents of Blood to it. Fix your Eye and Heart upon yonder bright Prospect, and that will support you under all Difficulties and Discouragements. The Sufferings of this present Time are not

worthy to be compar'd with the Glory which will be revealed to us there. Hold fast this Hope, and 'twill not only *sustain*, but even *exhilarate* us under the Pressures of all temporary Evils, except Presumptuous Sin. Yea, I am persuaded, that so long as we look stedfastly upon the Receptacles of the Saints in Light, we shall be more than Conquerours through him that loved us. Neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C H A P. V.

The Conclusion, being both a Summary, and a Supplement to the whole Discourse.

I Have now in a Manner finish'd my Thoughts about *Visible* and *Material* Worlds; and in my second part of this Work, I shall treat of the *Angelical* Worlds: Which being a nobler Subject, will furnish us with more entertaining Speculations.

From what has been laid down in this Part, we may be fully satisfied, that God's *Universe* is full of Orbs; that those Orbs are full of *People*, and every Corner of them fraught with Living Creatures. The vast and comprehensive Space, which is taken up by the intire Complement of visible Orbs, is a wide Ocean of *Life* and *Genius*: Probably, neither its Innumerable

numerable *Depths*, or *Shores* are known to any Being but *God*; of whose *Immensify*, with all their *Fullness* and *Refulgence*, they are but an *Imperfect Shadow*.

But tho' the intire Universe of Matter is as a *Point* to its *Author*; yet this ample Theatre of *Derivative* Life and Activity, is Unsurveyable to, not only our *Ocular*, but our *Intellectual* View. We cannot number the *Plurality* of *Systems* whereof the whole consists; nor explain the *Unity* of its Makers Design in all of them; tho' we are sure of his Observance of *uniform* Laws, throughout all the apparent *Diversities* of them. And yet, as our Belief of this Truth hath solid Foundations, and is far from being *Chimerical*, or *Pernicious* to us; so the Discovery of it is not useless, and undeserving of the Labour that found it out.

For as the Knowledge of a Plurality of Worlds and Creations, has a natural Power to enliven our Study of the Scripture: So it enlarges our Ideas, and ventilates our Fervour, in the use of Prayers and Doxologies. This single Truth duly attended to, is a Volume of enlightning Comments upon the Prayer prescribed by our Lord to us; but principally upon these following Articles of Petition in it, *Our Father which art in Heaven; Hallowed by thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven: Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory; for ever and ever, eis r̄as aīwas, among Worlds.* Were we more intent upon the August Ideas supported by these Expressions, the Lord's Prayer would not be disus'd by some; nor so irreverently hurried

hurried over by others, as it is most shamefully amongst us.

And as it would make us reverent in the Recital of our Prayers; So 'tis very promotive of those Graces of the Heart, which are the best Qualifications for the right Performance of Prayer. For it begets *Humility*; Now the Prayer of the Humble pierceth the Clouds, and the Bars of the most High; It inflames us with the *Love of God*, and the profoundest Veneration for him: It fixes our Affections on Things above. And whilst 'tis thus with us, the Name of God will not only be upon our Lips, but sealed upon our Hearts; Neither will these be far from him, and set upon some prevailing Concupiscence, amidst our external Professions and Exercises of Devotion. In a Word, It strengthens our Faith, and establishes our Hope: But these are perseveringly importunate in their Addressee; Whereas the diffident asker is like a Wave of the Sea; His Prayers are too faint and languid to prevail.

And here I had clos'd with Thanks to God, (whose assistance I have all along implor'd; in my Consultation of his Holy Word upon this Subject) for the discovery of a Truth so serviceable to the Designs of Piety; but that I am sensible I have only *asserted*, but not *prov'd*, that all the foremention'd Structures of Matter were framed by one Infinite Mind. Now this having been demonstrated many Years since, in a Sermon preach'd first in the Morning, at the *Temple Church*; and in the Afternoon, at *Westminster Abbey*; and afterwards, in several other

other Audiences, I here subjoin it, by way of Supplement; hoping, that since I reserved it for this Place, those worthy Persons who long since requested, some of them, Transcripts, and others of them, a Publication of it, will be hereby fully satisfied, that my refusal to comply with their Request before, was not owing to any want of that Respect, which was due to their Worth and Character.

THE WORLD

Transcribed by the World

God

Being the Prince of this World

World, God has been

World, which he has bestowed on his other

measures. And among these singular

world, there is none more considerable than

the Capacity of Thought and Reflection, by

which he entertains himself, and most

of his Thoughts are views and ideas. By this

faculty it is that he knows many things

which the senses do not reach, and never

can to him, by the Capacity of it is, the

capacity of the certain of many things

which were not known by the senses, and

which are not known by the senses, and

which are not known by the senses, and

Heb.

due to their Worth and Character.
owing to my want of that sort of which was
comply with their Request before, was not
he hereby fully satisfied, that my refusal to
and others of them a Publication of it, will
since requested some of them, Transcripts,
this Place, those worthy Persons who long
employment, that since I returned it for
other Audience, I have insisted it, by way of

Heb. XI. 3.

*Through Faith, we understand
that the WORLDS were
framed by the Word of
God.*

MAN being the Prince of this lower World, God has been pleas'd to endow him with several Gifts and Powers, which he has bestow'd on no other Creatures. And among those singular Favours, there is none more considerable than that Capacity of *Prospect* and *Reflection*, by which he entertains himself with a most spacious Theatre of Views and Ideas. By this Capacity it is, that he knows many Things, which the sight of his Senses would never discover to him : By this Capacity it is, that he is convinc'd of the certainty of many Things, which were done long before he had a Being ; and of many Dispensations of Providence, which will not be actually present, till distant Ages of Futurity shall have become past and gone : By this, in a Word, we know how we come by our Beginning, tho' we were not Privy to the Formation of our selves ; and are

acquainted with the great and invifible Author of Nature, to whose Bounty we are indebted for all the Signal Mercies we enjoy: And by this we have a fatisfactory Affurance of a nobler Life, than our prefent Life, after we fhall be removed out of our ~~first Stage~~ and travel into a finer Country than our Souls were ever in before. Now Man has no Ideas and Conceptions more ~~truly~~, or of greater Concern to him, than thofe which fhew him his *Creator* and *Immortality*. The good Ufe and Improvement of them, is very ferviceable to the Encouragement of our Religious Endeavours after Holinefs and Heaven. And therefore the Scripture frequently calls upon us to remember our *Creator*, and our *latter End*; becaufe the ferious Remembrance of *Death* and the *Creation*, doth naturally tend to make Men truly Confiderate and Religious, as will appear in the latter part of my Difcourfe upon this Passage of Divine Writ. *Through Faith we underftand that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God.* In which Words be pleas'd to obferve, 1st, That it is here fuppos'd, that there are many Worlds; *the Worlds.* 2^{ly}, It is directly afferted that all thefe Worlds, whatever their compleat Number may be, were made by one Being; *The Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God.* 3^{dly}, We may be fully fatisfied, That thefe Worlds were created by God, by an Evidence arifing from the pure and natural Reflections of our own Minds, tho' we were not prefent at the making of any of thefe Worlds; *Through Faith we underftand.*

First, It is here afferted, that there are many Worlds, *the Worlds.*

The

The Word which we render Worlds here, is *κόσμοι*, and seems to denote the several larger Orbs, or distinct Regions of the Universe, which are stock'd with different sorts of Creatures, suitable to the different Beauty and Nature of the Orbs in which they are planted; and in this Sense of the Word, there are many Worlds. This being premis'd, we may easily understand what Divine Writers mean, when they say, there are many Worlds in one Universe. All of them were created by one Being, tho' 'tis highly probable, they were not all created at the same time. However, whenever they were created at distant Intervals of *Time* and *Space*, they were created with the same Ease by God, as a Man utters a Word: And this is meant by the Phrase of their being created by the Word of God. He could, if he had pleas'd, have created them all together, as easily as he did at several times: But his Infinite Wisdom saw no necessity for creating the Worlds of Angels, and the World of Men at the same time; yet when they were created, they had a Dependence upon one another, and the *latter* Creations were but Additions to the Work and Structures of the same Glorious and Eternal *Architect*. And God farther appointed a Communication between the Inhabitants of the *higher*, and the Inhabitants of the *lower* Creation. Hence, when the Globe that we inhabit was made, according to the account given of its Creation in the ancient Books of *Moses* and *Job*, we read that the Holy Angels were highly pleas'd and delighted with the sight of this new Transaction of Providence. For then those *Morning-Stars* (who according to the supposition

position of Scripture, and the concurrent Judgment of the Ancient Fathers of the Church upon the place, were long before created) *Sang together ; and all the more glorious Sons of God shouted for Joy.* In all probability, Our Globe, and the Creatures and Productions of it, receive some kindly influence from all the other Orbs of the Universe : From some of them we evidently see it doth ; and possibly from all the rest in some respect or other, tho' not so discernably to our Senses. And as our Bodies by this correspondence, derive Benefit from them, thro' the invisible Channels of the Air : So also our Souls are visited and succour'd, by a certain number of the glorious Inhabitants of those Orbs. By the appointment of God, they are all ministring Spirits in Courses to the Heirs of Salvation. Whether they be Might, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, they are all related to the Mind of Man ; and Man by the Powers of his Mind is related unto them. For the Mind of Man by the Flights of *Contemplation and Charity*, converseth with those Sacred Beings, traverses their Glorious Mansions in his Thoughts, and makes their Joys his own in some sense and distant Degree, by those passionate Hopes and Presages he has of possessing them in the next World of Human Souls. Some of those Glorious Orbs are already possess'd by the Souls of Holy Men departed, and will be possess'd by the rest of us in our Order, when the appointed times of our entring them shall come : But the most glorious Orbs which the Saints shall possess, will be at the General Resurrection, when their perfectest State will begin, and all Triumphant Saints shall take
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Possession of the same kind of Glory, but of different Degrees at once, and shall continue to rejoice and reign in them together to all Eternity.

And thus you see what *St. Paul* means, when he tells us that there are many Worlds: We hence see, that the belief of this Tenet, *That those Orbs above us are inhabited by innumerable kinds of Creatures, adapted by the frame of their Being for the respective Regions to which they belong*, makes no Schism in the Universe; but they all hang lovingly together, and move with an agreeable Harmony. And I know no reason to suspect, how it can make any Schism in the Church; nor why any Man should hold a contrary Opinion, unless it be to gratify the scornful and scurrilous Wit of our Modern *Deists*, who always affect, first to misrepresent *Christianity* in this as well as other Particulars; And when they have put it into an Antick Dress of their own devising, they formally raise their Objections against their Misconceits of our Holy Religion; and ridicule it. But I pass on to the next Head.

2ly, All these Worlds, whatever the Complement of the number of them be, were created by one Being. *Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God*, all of them had their Original from the same Author. All *Minds*; all Beings that consist solely of *Matter*; and all Beings that are compounded of both *Mind* and *Matter*, are alike his Creatures and Handywork: He first made the Matter whereof every rough and dark Chaos consisted: And out of such Shapeless and unsightly Masses, form'd those beautiful *Constellations* of Orbs, which entertain our Sight
and

and *Thought* with so much Wonder and Delight. *Confusion* became *Order* at his Command, and with a Word he reduc'd every rude and stupendous *Congeries* of Matter, to several regular Divisions, and out of those diversified Proportions he formed an innumerable Variety of Worlds and Creatures in *Weights*, *Number*, and *Measure*. To some of these Orbs he allotted a larger Scope of Spaces: Others he confin'd within the limits of a lesser Expansion. Some of them he fill'd with *Mortal*, others with *Immortal* Creatures: Those Creatures which are intirely Mind by Nature, are intirely Immortal: Those Creatures which are intirely Matter, by the Constitution of their Nature are intirely Mortal: A Third sort of Creatures which are part Mind, and part Matter in the Ground-Work of their Nature, and are ordained for both a Mortal and Immortal World, have their Orbs of Tryal first, and their Orbs of Rewards afterwards: In the former they are Mortal, because after a certain Period of Time is compleated, they leave their Orbs of Tryal, and enter their Worlds of Rewards: In those latter Worlds they are either for ever happy, or for ever miserable. Every one of those Worlds are beautiful in their Seasons, and well fitted for the Uses they were made for: And the meanest of even those Mortal Creatures that inhabit them, and make a small part of them, are richly endow'd, and most curiously wrought in every part of their Frame and Structure; so neatly, that all the Philosophy of this World cannot find out all the Vertues and Endowments of the meanest Worm, or Insect in it. Microscopes have
advanc'd

advanc'd this Part of Knowledge very much ; but after all the Inventions and Inquiries of Men, they have not yet made themselves Masters of them : Much less can they pretend to tell, how those greater Orbs perform their Motions with such an exact and regular *Concentricity* ; or hang so firm upon their Centres in so liquid a *Medium*, as *Air*, and *Ether*. How much less further shall we conceive the Extent of the Endowments of those Ethereal Beings, which inhabit the more exalted Orbs of the Universe ? Our Minds, tho' imprison'd in Mortal Bodies, have very strange and mystical Operations ; But theirs must have infinitely greater : The meanest Spirit of the lowest Class of Angels, greatly exceeds the Capacity of our Minds, more perhaps than the *Native Light* of the *Sun* exceeds the borrowed Light of the *Moon* : And yet those glorious Beings exceed one another as much in Species and Capacity, as one Star differs from another in Glory. But tho' the Scale of Being, from Man to the Supreme Angel of the highest Order of Angels, ascends to such a Prodigious Height, and their Diversity in Number, Capacity and Gradations in Glory, be so transcendently various and Infinite to our Conceptions : Yet all those Innumerable Worlds and Inhabitants thereof, had but one Eternal Mind for their Maker : They were all form'd by him : *He said, Let there be Light, and there was Light* : Let there be Stars, and behold they appear'd : Let there be Innumerable Angels, and Hosts of them sang his Praises in an Instant. One Eternal Mind made them all, and all with Ease : Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the splendid

Train of Heaven, with as much ease as the more limited Minds of Men: Sun and Stars, with as much ease as the Roses of *Sharon*. A Word made the *first*, and a Word made the *last*; for all these Productions, tho' so vastly different to us, were alike easy to Omnipotence. 'Tis true, it is hard to us to conceive, how God should by his Power and Wisdom communicate such an Innumerable Company of Spirits and Souls, without lessening the Substance of his own great and tremendous Being; and 'tis harder still to conceive, how he should be the Author of *Matter*, since our strictest Meditations upon his Nature oblige us to believe, that the exalted Purity and Perfection of his Being, does not admit of any Thing so weak and gross in it, as impotent and sluggish Matter is: For all Matter of it self, without some Mind to move and manage it, be it never so fine and delicate in its Kind, is evidently destitute of such Motion and Activity, as thinking Substances glory in. But let us consider the Nature of our own Minds, and the manner of the Operation of our Minds upon our Bodies, and how unable we are to explain them; and then we shall cease to wonder at our Ignorance of God's formation of Matter, tho' he has no such Thing as Matter in his own Being. The Mind of Man has no such Thing as Matter in it, and yet it finds Sensations of *Pleasure* during the *sound* State; and Sensations of *Pain*, during the *ill* State of the Body: Let it but will the Eye to look, the Hands to Work, the Feet to walk; those Parts of the Body shall discharge their proper Functions in an Instant: And yet who could hitherto shew us the true cause
of

of this constant immediate Reaction of the Will and Passions of the Mind, and of the Motions and Temperature of the Body upon each other? and how that which hath nothing of *Idea* in it self, should be the Occasion of various Ideas in us? Nevertheless, 'tis what we daily experience in our selves. Now shall our own bound-ed Minds be secret to us, in the Ground-work of their Sovereignty and Command over the Body? and we at the same time presume to disbelieve, or but faintly to believe the Creation of *visible* Worlds by the Power of an Infinite an eternal Mind, only because we can't conceive how the Power of such a Being should communicate and produce Matter, tho' we have as clear a Conviction of the World's being necessarily created by such an Eternal Mind, as we have of the Being of any *Material* World, and of the certainty of our own Existence? especially when we must know, if we rightly consider Things, that God's Original Production of any thing, must be one of the most My-sterious of all his Operations without himself; I say, *without himself*; *or those within himself* are still to be sure more tremendous.

We discover the *Artist* by his *Works*, and all *Effects* suppose a *Cause*: And the nature of all Effects, proves the nature of the Cause which did Contrive and Design them. The whole Fabrick of the Universe, and every greater or lesser part of it, have such fine Strokes of Counsel in every line of them, as are evident Signatures of Art and Design; and therefore all of them must have some designing Cause for the Author of them: Since neither the whole nor any parts of it, had power enough,

by Vertue of their perfections, to be the Authors of themselves; neither have they the Characters of Eternity upon them; for we observe them subject to changes and decays; but nothing that is so, can have been Eternal. Wherefore, since nothing that is visible to Sense, could be the Original Author of it self, or any thing else; much less of the Essence of its own Nature, Our Conceptions must lodge the Attribute of Creator, in some *Invisible* Being that had no cause it self; but is, and always was, and ever will be an Eternal Mind, possess'd of sufficient Perfections to *make, see, fill, and sustain* all Things and Places without *Exhausting, or Impairing* himself by such Communication of, and with other things; just so the Rays of the Sun are not spent or defil'd, by shedding Influences on all things here below.

We have no Notion of any thing beside *Mind and Matter*: we experience Mind to be the more Active and Efficacious principle of the two; For we see our own Souls at one View, can take in more space than all the Matter we ever saw: we know the Mind only is capable of *Wisdom* to *devise* Matter, of *Goodness* to *Create* it, and of *Power* to *Act* by, and *upon* it; tho' we don't know how it doth it: And nothing but an Infinite Mind, Transcendently Superiour to ours, could have Counsell, Strength and Goodness enough to create an Universe of Worlds. And thus the visible Scene of things do demonstrate, and point out to us an invisible Creator so plainly, and with so bright a Conviction, that we are forc'd to say with "*Plotinus*, could we but hear the Voice of the
" World

“ World, we should hear it say nothing but
 “this, *I was created by God* : And did the motions
 of the Spheres make such Musick by their Har-
 mony, as some of the Ancients thought they
 did, we should find the tune of those charm-
 ing Instruments, intirely set to those *Anthems*
 of *Praise*, which the Angels continually Sung
 in the presence of this *Great God*.

3dly, We are fully satisfied that God crea-
 ted these Worlds, from the pure and natural
 Reflections of our own Minds; tho’ we were
 not present at the making of any of them.
Through Faith we Understand. In *Creation* God
 wrought invisibly, and without any such In-
 struments as *Democritus* and *Epicurus*, blinded
 by a sensual Stupidity, thought were neces-
 sary for God to make the World with. Many
 of our Ideas come purely from Reflection;
 and not at all from Sensation: Such are our
 Ideas of *Consciousness*, *Thought*, *Justice*, *Grati-
 tude*, and other Vertues: Such are our Ideas of
past and *future*: Of this sort are our Ideas of
God, a *Mind* and our *Creatour*. ’Tis by the
 Canvassing of such Ideas, that visible things
 do prove the reality of the Being of an Invisi-
 ble God. His Being is not discover’d to us,
 by the sight of those things; but our Reason
 finds it by meditation upon that sight. The
 Beasts see this stately Scene of visible things
 as well as we; but they don’t spell out the
 Characters of *Deity*, that are every where
 written upon it legibly to us. ’Tis the pro-
 perty of nothing under a Principle of *Reason*
 and *Reflection*, to find out causes by their effects,
 and to track the Treadings of an Artist by his
 Work. ’Tis thus that we discern a God in

the World, and know as satisfactorily that it was he that made it, as if we had seen him with our Eyes, (supposing it were possible to see him) rearing it out of nothing and framing it from the first, in such goodly order as we now behold it. A *Child* or an *Idiot* can see *Circles*, *Triangles*, and other *Mathematical Diagrams*, as well as the most Skilful *Geometrician* in the World; but he has not the skill and Reason to demonstrate the properties and proportions of those Figures; in a Methodical train of Consequences, drawn from indisputable principles; nor to invent and improve several useful and curious sorts of *Mechanism* by the help of them, as the *Mathematician* does. In like manner, tho' our bodily sight shews us Fabrics of matter, upon the existence whereof we build the certain belief of there being a Creator; yet 'tis the Mind that gives us the certain knowledge and discovery of him. Indeed the *Heavens declare the Glory of God*, and the *Firmament shews his handy Work*. But how? to our Eyes? it shews the *Surface of the Heavens to them*; and so it doth to the Eyes of *Brutes*: But it shews the *Glory of God*, and the *Heavens to be his handy Work*, only to our *Minds*; Only Reason and Reflection well exercis'd can discern this thro' them; and learn it from our Contemplation of them.

Suppose our Souls had been created with such Endowments as they now have, and no such Visible Orbs as the Heavens, had been made, nor any thing like them; yet the *Operations of our thinking*, without the Sight, or knowledge of any sort of *Bodies* or *Matter*, would have referr'd us to the acknowledgement
of

of some greater Mind than our own, for the Author of these Minds, and all the Operations of them, whereof in such circumstances we should have been conscious to our selves, without the least knowledge or Idea of matter. Upon this Supposition, That Infinite Mind who is invisible to our Senses now, and is so of necessity in his own Nature, would have been visible in a *near* Idea then (as he is to *Separate Souls*) and not in the least spotted or defil'd by any *Corporeal* Image of him, which in our present weakness we are too apt to be forming of him; and nothing but a proof of him under some gross Representation, will satisfy some Sensual Sceptics. In short, we should then, without the least Idea of Matter, have had such a pure Conception of him, as the Spirituality of our Souls would naturally have given us of that lovely Parent of Souls, in whom Thinking Creatures, as well as animated Organs of Matter, do live, and move, and have their Being. For he is alike near to our Souls, as to our Bodies, and can be seen and discover'd by nothing but our Souls. However, no Man who makes an accurate use of his Powers of Reflection, can question the reality of his Being, upon the account of its invisibleness to the Organs of Sense. We are Conscious to our selves of having a *thinking Principle* within our selves, which must be a *Substance*, tho' we cannot see it with our Eyes: It can't be *Body*, forasmuch as matter cannot foresee things future, look back on things past, Govern Kingdoms, learn Arts, or Project for the good of ones Country and Posterity. Matter is *incompetent* for such Operations as these.

these. Thus tho' an Universal Cause or Creator of Worlds, is not visible to our Eyes, nor did we ever with them see such a Being at Work; yet we are (or may be) sure, that there is such an *infinite Spirit* in the World, distinct from it, and of a larger extent than it, and endued with greater Perfections than all the Inhabitants of it put together; because we see the Prints and Footsteps of such a Being in all the parts and Creatures of the World, and when-ever we Reflect seriously on the Matter, we can't but be conscious of his presence, with them all, as well as with our selves. The result of this Evidence which ariseth from the due use of Reflection, whether it be occasion'd by *Sensation* or not, is what the Apostle in the Text calls *Faith*; by which He means our being persuaded of the Truth, or certainty of any thing, whether it be past, present or future, upon the pure Conviction of such a kind of evidence. By *Faith*, saith he, *we Understand that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God. So that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear*: The Greek Word *νοεω* signifies to discern a thing or Truth, by a pure perception of the Mind and Understanding, without any interposal of Sense or Imagination: And the last Words of the verse of my Text, will bear this Paraphrase; *So that those numerous Orbs which are visible to the Eye, were made out of the active perfections of an Infinite Spirit, which don't make their appearance to our bodily sight, but are to be discern'd by our Understanding, and only by that.*

In those invisible perfections were lodg'd all the *Archetypal* Patterns and Models of all their

their Beings, before they had a *Material* and *Sensible* Existence. 'Tis the Mind only can see a Mind, and nothing below Understanding can discern Skill and Understanding, and the native Properties and Endowments of it; tho' the effects of its Operations and Contrivances may be visible even to Sense, and one Intelligent Being can Trace the Actings of another, in such Sensible Effects and Productions.

And thus I have done with my three Heads; and I hope you will excuse my being so tedious in my Endeavours, to Illustrate the certainty of all Worlds having been created by one Infinite, Eternal, and Understanding Cause; and of the Spirituality of his Nature. But the Sceptical Humour of the Age, put me upon it; and I have deliver'd my Sentiments about this Matter, as plainly as the Nature of my Subject would permit: And I trust I have said something, that if well consider'd, may expose the weakness of their senseless Demand, who want to see a *God*, an *Angel*, a *Soul*, and a *future State*; before they will believe any such thing; for this is to reverse the Nature of things: And I pray God, they may consider this Matter so seriously as they ought in time; that they may know, and own their Lord and Maker; and perform their Duty to him before it be too late: Which is the only way to prevent their having the worst sort of Evidence, (and which in some Sense may be call'd the most gross and Sensible Evidence) of a God, by feeling the severity of his Revenging *Justice*, in the everlasting Torments of *Hell* Flames.

And tho' every Discourse which aims at the Conviction of the Understanding on such a Subject

Subject as this, in so profane an Age of *Libertinism* as ours, may upon the account of its seasonableness be too justly term'd *Practical*; yet in the close of my Sermon, I will make it more practical still to the meaner, and the better dispos'd part of my Hearers; by shewing, how meditation upon God, *considered as a Creator of many Worlds*, doth contribute to the inflaming us with devout Passions and Affections towards him, and with pious ardours after a nearer enjoyment of him in another World. For,

First, It gives us great and stately Conceptions of God: How unbounded must the Perfections of the Author of so many Worlds and Creatures needs be? He was before all Things, and by him all Things subsist. Wherefore our Notions of him cannot be too great and awful: Nay, our sublimest Ideas of his Attributes cannot possibly be great enough to reach them. The Spirituality of this Almighty Mind doth as far surpass the Spirituality of ours, as his Thoughts do exceed our Thoughts. *Great is our God, yea, his Greatness is unsearchable.*

Secondly, Meditation upon God's being a Creator, should teach us Humility. For how little and poor a Thing is Man, if compared with the most inferiour Member of the lowest Class of Angelical Creatures, who are all of them the Products of his Omnipotence; much less, if compar'd with all the splendid Myriads of Spirits which he hath commanded into Being; much less still, if compared with all the Worlds that he hath fram'd? How dare our narrow and groveling Souls then pretend to grasp his Being with their Thoughts, or to determine too

too peremptorily about the Secrets of his Nature and Decrees? How dare we censure any of the Proceedings of his venerable Providence? The great Sovereign of Worlds, who by right of Creation ruleth over all, hath every Thing Regular in his own Thoughts; because he knows the different Use and Perfections of every Thing in their Kind, and the mutual dependance of all the Worlds he has made: He has an Eye to the furthest end of his Scheme and Drama, in his disposal of all the Events and Revolutions which he has allotted for them all, and therefore knows them all, consider'd with regard to the Consummation of all Things, and their subserviency to one another, to be most reasonable, just, and good. And so should we too, if we had but foresight enough to see so far. But, since such Knowledge is too excellent for Man, and we cannot attain unto it, let us learn the Wisdom of acquiescing in all the Determinations of his good Pleasure, as most reasonable and fitting, tho' we cannot always say in *this*, or *that particular*, how they are so. Can it seem strange or hard to us, that many of the Designs of God in his Governance of the Universe, are secret and unsearchable to us; when we consider him as the Creator and Sovereign of so many Worlds, and cannot but at least be very Ignorant of the State of those Worlds? Let us therefore stand more in awe of him, who takes delight in humbling the Proud, and raising the Lowly.

3ly, Meditation on God as a Creator, should beget in us the most confident Perwasion of his Goodness, and gracious Designs towards us. To Create at all, much more to abound so in creating,

ating, is an Act of *Grace* and *Love*; for 'tis to communicate Life and Being, and argues him who does it infinitely kind and generous. Whenever we reflect that he made us, we can't find in our Hearts to think, that he could make Souls only to *Prereprobate* them to eternal Ruine. Banish all such dishonourable and blaspheming Jealousies far from you; you may be sure of it, They that are ruin'd, ruine themselves: *God hath not appointed us to Wrath*, but desireth that all would repent and be saved.

4ly, Meditation on God as a Creatour, gives us a Confident Persuasion of the Immortality of both our Bodies and our Souls. The great Father of Spirits that gave us our Souls at first, and united them to these Bodies, can easily support them in Being, after the Dissolution of these Bodies, and reunite them hereafter to them again, as he doth continually renew the Face of the Earth. He that brought *both* into being and the present World, has a sufficient stock of *Benevolence* and *Power* to introduce them into *new* and *better* Worlds, after they have left *this*. Look up then towards the Orbs above, and see your true Country: In your Heavenly Fathers House are many Mansions of Glory. Aspire after the Joys of that Immortality, for which ye are design'd. Fit your Souls by a Divine Temper, and your Bodies by an Holy Life, for the Enjoyment of them. *Contemplation, Faith, and Holiness* will make you Citizens of the Worlds of Glory: By *these* you must Conquer and Despise this World; by *these* you must obtain the other.

5ly, Meditation on God as a Creator, teaches us the reasonableness, and exhorts us to the

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Performance of the great Duty of loving and praising God. He that gave Strength, Agility, and Beauty, and all the other Endowments wherein Creatures pride themselves, to the Inhabitants of all the Worlds that he hath built, must needs be infinitely amiable in himself, and Master of transcendently greater Perfections ; for otherwise he could not be the Source and Fountain of whatever is excellent in Things *Finite*, nor impart so much *attractive Loveliness* to many of them, as he doth with a continual Emanation of Goodness. Moreover, upon the score of Gratitude, we ought to love God, as well as for the sake of his own intrinsic loveliness : For he hath endued us with Reason ; and so we are capable to entertain captivating Ideas and Impressions of his glorious likeness upon our Hearts.

God is Love, for he sent forth his Spirit, and we were all created ; and whenever we think on it as we ought, our Hearts must of necessity glow with *Seraphic Zeal* to do Honour to him ; all the Powers of our Souls can't but be transfus'd with Floods of *Divine Joy*, and we must find our selves pour'd forth into Love and Gratitude all over towards him.

Lastly, Meditation upon God as a Creator of many Worlds, recommends Generosity towards our Neighbours. Creating in God is an Act of the highest and most communicative Goodness : Now that excellent Being who was so generous as to make Men, and to make them Immortal Creatures, capable of *Heaven*, capable of *himself*, cannot but love those of us who are generous to our Fellow Creatures. Nothing likens us so much to God as the Practice

Office of Charity: Next to our Love of himself, he approves of our kindness to our Fellow-Creatures; by relieving them we shew our Willingness to relieve God himself, (whose Providence stands engag'd for them, when in Distress) supposing he could either want Relief, or we could give it him. A Freeness of Temper to be beneficent, is yet the Character of a truly Noble Soul, and bespeaks one born of God, for *God is Love*. And as it recommends us to the *Creator*, so it does to his *Creatures*. The Inhabitants of every Creation have a kind Respect for the Generous, both in this World and that which is to come.

Now unto the Eternal Maker; and King of Worlds; the Disposer of Seasons, the Immortal, Invisible, the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: Who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light, which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen or can see. To him the only wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever. To him Dominion and Majesty be ascribed not only by us; but by the Inhabitants [ἡς τὰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων, 1 Tim. i. 17.] of those Worlds of Worlds that he hath made.

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O Everlasting God, who hast Obtained and Constituted the Services of Angels and Men in a wonderful Order, Mercifully grant, that as thy Holy Angels always do thee Service in Heaven; so by thy Appointment they may succour and defend us on Earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one Communion and Fellowship, in the Mystical Body of thy Son Christ our Lord; Give us Grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly Living, that we may come to those Unspeakable Joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly Love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.